



METRO LINK IS BACK ON TRACK

Report by Andrew Turton

MULTI-MILLION plans reviving the Midland Metro extension to Dudley, Merry Hill and Brierley Hill have been bolstered after new funding was agreed.

Senior councillors have agreed to plough £100,000 into the scheme to bring the proposal up to date to finally get it off the ground.

Officials have warned 'work needs to start in earnest' to present revised plans or potential funding could be lost.

Plans to extend the Metro from Wednesbury had been dogged by delays after successive governments failed to commit funding.

But Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe says a £1 billion funding package agreed with Chancellor George Osborne can secure its future.

Councillor Lowe says council leaders are supporting the proposals through the new West Midlands Combined Authority.

The Black Country Executive Joint Committee has granted approval for £100,000 of funding to be put towards developing the scheme. The money will be spent on revamping plans and costings.

Update

Officials say work to update the proposals will gather pace during the new financial year. Currently the Midland Metro links Wolverhampton with Birmingham city centre via Wednesbury and West Bromwich. The proposed scheme would run for around seven miles from the existing line at Wednesbury via Great Bridge, Horseley Heath, Dudley Port, Dudley town centre, the Waterfront and Merry Hill, before terminating at Brierley Hill town centre.

A report to the committee said: "Following the West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Deal announced by George Osborne on November 17, the Department for Transport (DfT) have provisionally allocated funding to the proposed East/West Metro link. The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro forms part of this wider scheme. The scheme has been identified as a priority for a number of years within the Black Country."

"In light of the recent decision, a refresh of the scheme, design and business case needs to be undertaken. The review work would be undertaken by Centro and the appointed framework consultants to review the business case, scheme programme and costs."

"The work needs to start in earnest now to allow the scheme to meet the DfT requirements and prevent the funding offer from the DfT being withdrawn."

Councillor Lowe added: "A lot of the pre-preparatory work was done many years ago but of course the funding has never been available. Now we are making progress."

ROLL UP FOR WHEELY BOSTIN' NEW VIEW OF DUDLEY



Wheel's in motion – a view from the ferris wheel as the first passengers take a spin 115ft above Dudley town centre

UP, up and away – the latest addition to Dudley's skyline gives a bird's eye view of the town.

Just three months ago people jumped on board the 115ft high ferris wheel to get a spectacular view of Birmingham city centre.

But now the wheel has been brought to the Black Country with business bosses hoping it will boost visitors to the town.

The DY Eye took its first customers up in the sky after its grand launch on Saturday. It will remain in the town over the Easter period, up until April 10.

Residents queued to get their first trip on the big wheel in Stone Street Square after the official opening by the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Steve Waltho.

Officials say its arrival is the 'catalyst' to showcase the transformation of the town centre in recent months.

They are keen to welcome more visitors following major projects such as the £6.7 million revamp of the market place and £1m revamp of Coronation Gardens.

The recently formed Dudley Business Group has brought together traders and en-

trepreneurs to work on the project to boost the town's profile.

Dudley Council leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, said it was a major way to market newly-revamped Dudley to tourists and shoppers.

"It is a bostin' initiative," he said. "This is another stage of the regeneration of Dudley. You've seen the market place investment, Coronation Gardens, the new lighting of buildings in the town."

"Now we have the DY Eye. This is the first time the wheel has ever come to the Black Country."

HOUSING

45,000 homes in garden city project

A £6 BILLION plan has been unveiled to turn the Black Country into Britain's biggest 'garden city' by building 45,000 homes. Civic and business leaders are at an international property exhibition in Cannes in a bid to win investment for the plans.

The huge project would see the Garden City built around Wolverhampton, extending to Lye and Dudley Port, West Bromwich and Aldridge. Homes would be built with open spaces and greenery in mind.

Construction would carry on for a decade in one of Britain's biggest brownfield site regeneration schemes.

SCHOOL

OSH create new sixth form centre

A LANDMARK school has revealed plans to create a new sixth form block transforming an historic building.

Old Swinford Hospital school, Stourbridge, says it is a major step to boost facilities for its older students.

Work to revamp the oldest boarding house – Foster – at the prestigious school off Heath Lane is expected to be completed by September.

It is a major investment at the state-maintained boarding school, one of just 34 in the country.

ENTERPRISE

Bid to create special zone business boost

A BID to secure Government backing for a new enterprise zone in the Black Country is gathering pace.

Proposals have been tabled to bring in the zone too boost The Waterfront and Harts Hill areas of Brierley Hill.

Dudley Council and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership are now working together on the plans. Proposals were first mooted in 2011 but shelved in favour of Darlaston and Wolverhampton's i54.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood says he has been lobbying for the enterprise zone and has held talks with intu, owners of the Merry Hill shopping centre.

INSIDE

FLAG WILL FLY FOR FESTIVAL



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Royal approval for new canal centre



The Princess Royal at Dudley

PRINCESS Anne took a boat trip along a Black Country canal as she officially opened a £3 million visitor and heritage centre in Dudley.

As the sun shone across Dudley on Monday it was the perfect day for The Princess Royal to visit Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust.

Princess Anne arrived at The Portal, off Birmingham New Road, and was greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley, Councillor Steve Walther and his wife Jayne, before being introduced to management, including chief executive Nick Morris and several trustees.

Wearing a long green coat, she smiled and spoke to staff individually, taking the time to ask about their roles at the trust's new centre, which includes a purpose-built learning suite and restaurant called The Gongoozler.

Interested

The princess spoke to canal volunteer Julia Bird, who said: "She was very interested in what I had to say and particularly about the fact that I used to work for Kennet Horse Boat Company in Berkshire, as horses are one of her main passions."

The Princess Royal took a 45-minute boat trip through Lord Ward's Tunnel. The tour was led by Melvyn Wright, towpath manager, who explained the waterway's history. She also met excited children from Year 5 at Wren's Nest Primary School and unveiled a plaque to mark the opening.

The Princess Royal said: "I would like to say a big thank you for the way in which you have kept history alive." Before leaving Princess Anne was presented with a traditional canal style painted horse feeding bowl by artist and boat skipper Tim Yorke.

MP advising caution on football fan power

A BLACK Country MP has urged caution over suggestions that football fans should be given more powers to help run their clubs.

The issue was discussed in the House of Commons amid fears over where the game is heading due to rising foreign ownership and the huge sums of money coming into the Premier League.

Renewed talk of a European Super League, for the biggest richest teams on the continent, has also been met with alarm.

Labour shadow sports minister Clive Efford is seeking to move a football governance bill, which would make it easier for fans to intervene in the running of their clubs.

The right to buy shares and mandatory fan representation on the board are among measures which have been suggested.

Wolves, West Bromwich Albion and Aston Villa are all facing uncertain futures. Wolves and Villa are both up for sale while Albion chairman Jeremy Peace is seeking fresh investment.

Improved

Eltham MP Mr Efford said his proposals had received the backing of dozens of supporters' groups. He told the Commons: "When we look around football today, it is clear that fans are under-represented and not listened to. No matter what level of the game we look at, we see examples of where things could be improved if football fans had greater representation."

But James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, while stating he was in favour of greater supporter involvement in club, said that he was opposed to the proposed bill.

He was unsure whether the proposal 'adequately addresses some of the complexities of encouraging supporter ownership and participation'.

The Conservative MP said: "We must have a much tighter regime of football club licensing and the FA has a role to play in that. Greater supporter participation in football is critical but I am not convinced that the mechanism he outlines in the bill is the most appropriate way of dealing with the problem he identifies."

Flying the flag for celebrations



Paul Palmer, of Black Country T-Shirts, Council leader Pete Lowe and Steve Edwards, of the Black Country Festival

It is the self-professed capital of the Black Country - and now a new flag is being proudly flown at Dudley.

A new Black Country flag will flutter proudly in the lead up to this year's Black Country Festival thanks to a donation.

Officials said the old Black Country flag flown from Dudley Town Hall had become worn after 12 months of 'marking the capital of the Black Country'.

But Black Country T-Shirts,

now based in Dudley town centre, stepped forward to donate a new one ready for the festival in July.

Dudley Council leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, said: "The Black Country Festival is the biggest event in the borough's calendar.

Region

"It is an opportunity for us all to celebrate everything that is fantastic about this region.

"We're really grateful to Black Country T-Shirts for the flag,

which will fly proudly from the roof of Dudley Town Hall in the lead up to what I am sure will be another bostin' month of celebrations."

Black Country T-Shirts moved to Castle Street, Dudley, in December last year and sells Black Country themed clothing and other items.

Paul Palmer from the shop joined Councillor Lowe and Steve Edwards, chairman of the Black Country Festival organising committee, to unfurl the flag that is to be flown from Dudley Town Hall.

More talks in bid to save Castle Hill venue

FURTHER talks will be held on the future of Dudley Hippodrome after it emerged a proposal to save the theatre was 'flawed'.

Independent assessors said financial proposals by campaigners fighting to save the landmark venue were 'extremely unrealistic'.

Dudley Council says it will hold more talks with the group but will also continue to pursue plans to demolish the former theatre.

The council paid £750 to assessors FGM Consulting to carry out analysis of a business plan compiled by the steering group, which includes members of Friends of Dudley Hippodrome. Assessor Stuart Shanks said: "The financial information contained in the business plan proposal is flawed."

A statement from the steering group said: "We have been working very closely with Dudley Council, who have given us their full support. We are pleased to say that the project is now moving forward. After feedback from our first business proposal submission, we have now arranged to meet the council's assessor to further develop our business plan."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We are continuing to have correspondence with the campaign group and have received some updated information, which we will consider.

"We will be meeting again with them in due course. Whilst we will continue to explore the friends group's scheme, we will also continue to develop an alternative proposal."

Teenager hurt in road accident

A 16-year-old girl suffered a head injury when she was hit by a car in Stourbridge on Tuesday morning.

Paramedics said the girl's injury was potentially serious and she had been unconscious for a short time before being airlifted to hospital in Birmingham.

The woman driver was left shaken and taken to Russells Hall Hospital as a precaution after the accident, which happened on Hodge Hill Avenue in Wolliscote at around 8am.

Ambulance service spokesman Murray MacGregor said the girl had started to come round while ambulance staff were treating her.

He added: "After assessment, she was airlifted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. She had also been immobilised. The car had considerable damage."

Folk and choral music at concert

THE Sound Company community choir will be joined by the Old Grey Cat folk band for a cabaret-style concert at St John's Church, Stourbridge, on Saturday at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £6 and will be available on the door or email in-soundcompany@gmail.com

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NEWS IN BRIEF

More than 100 homes proposed

HOUSING on a derelict former hospital site in Wordsley looks set to go ahead, after the scheme was recommended for approval by planners today (Thursday).

Proposals for 129 homes in the Ridge Hill Hospital grounds were due to be given the green light at a development committee meeting last month but councillors opted to visit the site before making a final decision.

Officers have recommended the plans for approval, which are back on the agenda for today's meeting of Dudley Council planners.

Temple expansion set for green light

THE expansion of a huge temple complex in Tividale has been recommended for approval by planners.

Proposals for the 21-acre Balaji Temple – the biggest in Europe – now look set to be given the green light by Sandwell Council.

These set out a scheme to construct a 15-metre tall building to house a giant festival chariot, and to build a processional route around the site off Dudley Road East. It will provide facilities to hold the Hindu festival Ratha Yatra. The three-storey high chariot is due to be unveiled in August.

Head injuries for man in 4x4 crash

A MOTORIST was treated for head injuries after a crash involving two 4x4 vehicles on the A491 near to Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley.

Police closed the busy route between Stourbridge and Wolverhampton for at least two hours following the collision at around 8.45pm Friday.

Emergency services attended the accident between the junctions of Bridge Street and Brierley Hill Road. On man was treated for head injuries and taken to hospital.

Drama students show their skills at college

DUDLEY students lit up the stage at Halesowen College when they performed a Shakespeare classic.

Pupils from The Brier, Cherry Tree and Ridgewood Schools performed Macbeth for friends, family and teachers.

The group have been studying drama at the college since September. Natalie Guest, drama lecturer, said: "This is a regular partnership with the schools and the college which has been going for five years."

Carnival help needed

ORGANISERS of Halesowen's family carnival are looking for more sponsors and entertainers to tack back the revived community event. The carnival on July 2 in Highfield Park will feature the Jorvik Vikings group and a dog show. Call carnival chairman Stuart Henley on 07967 147367.

Decision is deferred for regulations on taxi tints

A PLAN to enforce the removal of heavily tinted windows from taxis in Dudley has been deferred after pleas for a rethink from cabbies.

Taxi drivers said they were being forced to fork out hundreds of pounds to have cab windows replaced. They claimed many newer cars had factory-fitted tints and Dudley Council's policy needed revision.

There is a rule that at least 40 per cent of light must be able to travel through back windows of Hackney carriages and private hire taxis in order to be granted a licence by Dudley Council.

Officials said the rules helped passenger safety in the light of a child sexual exploitation review, following incidents elsewhere in the country.

The policy was set to be retained by the council's taxi committee with a condition giving cabbies three months in which to have windows changed before any sanctions were imposed.

But the committee, which met last week, decided to defer this decision. Councillors wanted to see examples of tinted windows before ruling on the issue.

Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association chairman, Shaz Saleem, said: "We welcome the council going back and investigate this again. There will be older cars on the roads if this policy is enforced. Drivers have been able to bring in better cars."

He said association members had shown evidence that there had been no crimes relating to tinted windows in the borough.

Motorist admits injuring girl, 15

A CAR valet has admitted causing serious injury to a 15-year-old Stourbridge schoolgirl by dangerous driving.

Claudia Visser, a pupil at Redhill School, was badly hurt when struck by a car as she crossed Grange Road, Pedmore, on December 17.

She remained in a coma for several days and suffered two broken legs, bleeding on the brain, a fractured skull and internal injuries.

Adnan Ajram, aged 24 from Careless Green, Lye, pleaded guilty to causing her serious injury by dangerous driving when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday.

He was remanded in custody to allow the preparation of a pre-sentence report until April 1.

Cakes and crafts shows at the NEC

FOUR shows are coming together at Birmingham's NEC. Sewing for Pleasure, Hobby Crafts and Fashion and Embroidery are running from today (Thursday) to Sunday, with Cake International Friday to Sunday.

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MP hits back in Sunday trading row

A BLACK Country MP has hit back over claims he misled constituents over a pre-election pledge to vote against extending Sunday trading hours.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood said he is against extending Sunday trading hours in Dudley borough, despite voting in favour of devolving responsibility over opening hours to local authorities.

The Government's plans to allow councils in England and Wales to decide on extending Sunday trading hours for larger stores were blocked in the Commons on Wednesday.

The proposals were defeated by 317 votes to 286, as 27 Tories rebelled – including Stafford MP Jeremy Lefroy.

All 54 SNP MPs voted against the Government,

even though there are no restrictions to Sunday trading in Scotland.

Labour had opposed the move, mounting a Keep Sunday Special campaign.

All of the other Black Country and Staffordshire MPs voted with their party.

Campaign

Prior to the general election last April, Mr Wood had given his support to a campaign run by shopworkers' union USDAW, which opposed moves to extend Sunday opening hours.

Now he has come under fire from constituents and shop workers, one of whom described his apparent about-face as 'a complete breakdown of trust'.

The Dudley South Conservative MP said: "I don't want any changes to Sunday opening hours in Dudley, but I think when you look at the country as a whole it is a decision that should be made on a local level. I'm in favour of devolving responsibility and made my decision to vote accordingly."

"In places such as London if they think it is right to increase hours then it should be a decision for their local authorities to make."

But supermarket worker Jayne Donnelly, said: "I think it is absolutely disgusting that before the election Mike Wood signed up to USDAW's Sunday Pledge, yet here we are less than a year later and he seems to have forgotten it."

"It is a complete breakdown of trust."

Inquiry after frightened carers' road rage ordeal

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after police allegedly told a petrified group of carers they were 'too busy' to help them during a road rage incident.

Members of the Dudley Carers Forum were travelling back from a Birmingham theatre when they say the group's minivan was in a collision with a car in the city centre.

They allege the car's driver acted aggressively towards them and pursued them into the Black Country but when they called 999 they were told officers could not help as they were too busy.

The group drove to Halesowen police station only to find that it had permanently closed. The group then drove to Brierley Hill police station where they say they were kept waiting outside for more than half an hour following a 'nightmare' 10-mile journey. The region's police and crime commissioner (PCC) David Jamieson said their claims would be investigated.

The incident on January 23 has brought into focus the issue of police accessibility in the wake of front desk closures over the last 12 months.

Accessible

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris, who campaigned in vain to keep the Laurel Lane station open, said: "It was obvious from the very beginning that incidents like this would happen following the closure of front desks. We warned the PCC at the time, but he did not listen. Instead he decided to announce the whole station would close."

"It is vitally important for the police to have a presence in Halesowen which is accessible to the public when incidents like this occur."

Councillor Bill Etheridge, a Sedgley councillor and Dudley's UKIP Euro MP, has called for Mr Jamieson to resign.

"We know there have been deep and damaging cuts to the police budget," said MEP Mr Etheridge. "But that budget is handled by the PCC, who has brought in a disgraceful station closure programme that has led us to the point where a group of vulnerable people on an outing cannot feel safe."

"It is time for Mr Jamieson to go and be replaced by someone who understands the first priority of policing should be public safety and not number crunching from behind a desk."

Last year more than 700 people signed a petition to save Halesowen police station, one of 28 in the area facing closure.

Mr Jamieson met with members of the Dudley Carers Forum, and said: "The concerns they have raised about the conduct of officers are being investigated thoroughly."



No haven – the carers were shocked to find that Halesowen police station had closed to the public

Prison for driver who had a knife

A STOURBRIDGE man who claimed a knife stashed in his car was used for fly-fishing has been jailed.

Matthew Cooper had failed to stop when initially spotted by a police officer on patrol, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

After Cooper initially failed to halt, the officer then searched the car and found the wooden-handled knife, which had a

14cm blade, between the driver and passenger seats.

Cooper, of Queensway, Pedmore, claimed he had the knife as he used it for his fly-fishing hobby.

Display

Ms Blondelle Thompson, defending, said: "In terms of the knife, he said it was used for

fly-fishing and it wasn't on open display."

But Mr Gary Cook, prosecuting, told the court that the 38-year-old had two convictions relating to knives.

Recorder Ben Nicholls said: "There is widespread concern about people who routinely carry knives." Cooper admitted possession of a bladed article and was jailed for six months.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



MORE things misheard. A reader swears her father-in-law came out of hospital having had a sirloin drip.

ON hearing the above, another reader asked: "Are you sure it was a sirloin drip? Might it have been a saline drip?"

MOST memorable TV quote of the week came from Delia's Welsh mother, beginning to suspect her daughter is a lesbian, in Call the Midwife (BBC1): "I am not an unsophisticated woman. I have been to Jersey."

I SUGGESTED recently that the £50,000 warning signs installed at our local ford would do nothing to stop idiots trying to drive through. Sure enough, the recent downpours delivered the usual crop of stranded cars and drivers punching their dashboards as their ruined engines spouted steam. The only way to stop people chancing their luck in a flooded ford is to tow an old banger into the water and leave it half-submerged. They'll get the message.

SHOCK, horror! The Daily Mail reveals that when the debate on gay marriage began, the Queen was against it. So how many 88-year-old people were in favour?

I HAVE no idea whether the Queen wants us in or out of the EU. But there is the issue of her dignity. Under UK law we are subjects, she is the monarch and her title is "Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith." Under EU law we are all equal citizens and her title, for voting purposes, is "Mrs E Windsor."



JOHN Longworth was forced to resign as director of the British Chambers of Commerce for supporting Britain quitting the EU. This allegedly compromised the BCC's neutral stance on the issue. So what if Longworth had spoken in favour of staying in the EU? Do you suspect for a moment that anyone would have batted an eyelid? Of course not. If you support the EU you may shout it from the rooftops. If you say it's time to quit, wait for the knock at the door. Hang on. I hear a knock...

I MUST have missed something in the report about a Scottish boy being stabbed to death in his school. The court heard that his 16-year-old killer frequently brought knives and other weapons into school and staff had spoken to him "once or twice." And that's it? Why did nobody tell the police that he was in possession of an offensive weapon and let the law take its course?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Sunday trading extension 'unpopular'

A SURVEY of thousands of Dudley residents has found overwhelming opposition to Government plans to change Sunday trading laws.

The survey was conducted by Dudley North MP Ian Austin and found nearly nine in 10 residents are opposed to extend Sunday opening hours for large shops.

The MP also met with shop workers in Parliament to hear their views.

Mr Austin decided to consult residents ahead of votes on Government proposals that would give councils the power to extend opening hours.

He sent a detailed survey to 5,000 residents and received more than 1,000 responses.

More than 80 per cent of residents opposed plans to devolve Sunday trading or felt decisions on Sunday trading should be made nationally.

They also expressed concerns for shop workers, with eight in 10 saying they felt they were put under too much pressure to work on Sundays.

Vote

Mr Austin will vote against the Government proposals. He said: "When I was a Dudley councillor in the 1990s I asked local people for their views on Conservative plans

to allow Sunday trading. There was massive opposition to the changes back then and in my latest survey nine in 10 residents say that they're against extended Sunday opening hours for large shops.

"Local people clearly don't want the current rules changed, they want a balance between trade, convenience and family life. I'll be voting against these changes in Parliament."

Get on your marks for the Sport Relief Mile event

A KEEP fit campaign has been welcomed by leading figures as the Sport Relief Mile returns to Dudley.

Sport Relief is taking place nationally between Friday and Sunday, March 18 to 20, with the Dudley Mile being held at 11.30am on the Sunday at the Dell Stadium in Brierley Hill.

It will pass through the Dell Recreation Ground and the Brockmoor nature reserve with competitors setting off at noon and completing three or six mile courses.

The event is being sponsored by Sainsbury's to raise money for people living in the poorest communities. People are being encouraged to participate through fundraising or by getting sponsored. Half of the money raised will be spent in the UK, with the other half used to help overseas.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "It is encouraging to know that the people of Dudley borough are again taking up the challenge and signing up for the Sport Relief Mile."

"It doesn't matter how fit we are because if we can't run the mile, we can jog or walk it. It really is the taking part that counts."

Programme manager Dean Hill, said: "The Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile in Dudley is everyone's opportunity to be physically active for a good cause."

"All ages and abilities, old and young, beginner to elite athlete, can take part and feel proud of themselves on this special day."

Motorcyclist has serious leg injury

A MOTORCYCLIST suffered a leg injury in a crash in Kingswinford.

The man, in his 20s, was involved in a collision with a car on Thursday, March 10, at 1.30pm at the junction of Stallings Lane and Charterfield Drive.

The rider needed advanced trauma care after West Midlands Ambulance Service sent an ambulance, a community paramedic and a critical care paramedic from the central accident resuscitation emergency team.

An ambulance service spokeswoman said: "The motorcyclist had ended up coming to rest approximately 20 feet further down the road from where the collision happened. He was found to have sustained a nasty lower leg injury."

He was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

Easter fun and games at the safari park

WEST Midland Safari Park, near Bewdley, is gearing up to host its annual Easter Extravaganza. Activities and competitions will be available to families as part of the standard admission price from March 19 to April 17. For details visit www.wmsp.co.uk website.

By Clare Butler

BOSSSES at a civic hall in the Black Country which has seen a surge in bookings say they will bring more 'vibrant' acts to the centre.

The increase in commercial bookings at Brierley Hill Civic Hall has helped Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) open up the venue to local community groups to put on their own events at discounted rates.

They only have 10 free Friday and Saturday evenings left for bookings this year.

Now a weekly 'cheesy' music Friday night out is being planned to start from next month.

Andy Gray, Dudley CVS chief officer, said: "We are a not-for-profit charity which supports local voluntary and community groups throughout Dudley borough. The revenue from commercial events at Brierley Hill Civic Hall is being reinvested into the voluntary sector."

"This enables us to offer the Civic Hall for community users."

Vibrant

"Our aim is to see Brierley Hill Civic Hall as a vibrant and accessible venue for all sorts of community activities, subsidised by income from commercial events."

Local voluntary events include The Dudley Youth Council Awards, Whitehouse Cancer Support Band Night and Synergy Group, which have all enjoyed subsidised rates for events at the Civic Hall.

In recent years Brierley Hill Civic Hall has been largely under-used and struggled to be financially viable.

The Big Cheesy Nights are part of a new era for the building. They will showcase the sounds of Abba and Wham, among others.

Boxing and wrestling nights have also been drawing in the crowds, as have comedy club nights and parties.

A new website will also be launched in the coming weeks with details of events at the venue.

Awards are given to NHS workers



Nicholas Owen, far right, with some health workers recognised by the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust STAFF at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust have been recognised for their dedication and commitment to patient care at their annual staff awards.

More than 300 staff gathered at The Venue in Dudley on March 3 for the awards ceremony hosted by former TV news reader and royal correspondent, Nicholas Owen.

He thanked the NHS personally for the care and treatment he received when he was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2002.

Individuals and teams based both in the hospital and out in the community who go the extra mile for their patients were presented with awards by Trust directors and senior members of staff.

The Trust took time out from the main awards to honour shift leader Hugh Davies who tragically died in a motorbike accident last year.

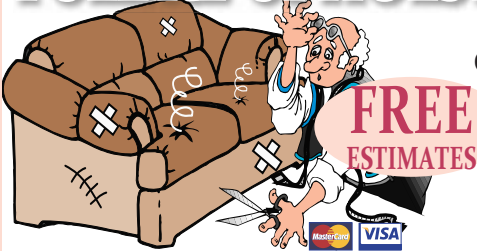
Staff joined new Chairman Jenni Ord in paying tribute to Hugh, ending with a standing ovation. In his memory, nominees who narrowly missed the award's shortlist were recognised and commended.

Rounding off the evening, Jenni Ord said: "It has been my privilege to share the evening with you and to learn about some of the fantastic services and staff commitment here at The Dudley Group."

"I am sure we have all seen and felt the care, respect and responsibility shown by all the nominees. Long may it continue for all our patients and public."

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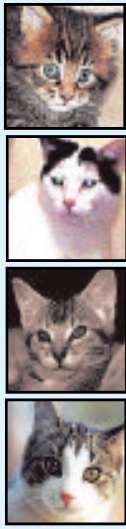
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Council leader backs police move

THE leader of Dudley Council has said he has 'no problem' with the closure of the town's police station, insisting that keeping as officers in their jobs was more important.

West Midlands Police announced last year it would be closing 28 front desk stations, including Dudley, to save cash.

Speaking at a West Midlands Police and Crime Panel meeting, Dudley Council leader Pete Lowe said: "We have to drive down costs. This is why I had no problem not defending the closure of Dudley Police Station."

It's whisky galore at two-day festival

THE Midlands Whisky Festival is returning to Stourbridge Town Hall next month.

The festival will take place over two days, Friday and Saturday, April 1 and 2, and offers the chance for connoisseurs to try a range of rare whiskies.

There will also be master classes running from experts including master blender Richard Paterson, which has already sold out, and with Laphroaig's John Campbell, Diageo's Colin Dunn and Ashok Chokalingam.

Advance tickets cost from £35 available at www.whiskyfest.co.uk website.

Jobs fair aimed at young people

A JOBS fair targeting unemployed 19 to 24-year-olds is being held in Dudley today (Thursday).

People are being encouraged to go along to the fair where jobs will be available to apply for. Training expert The Workshop, together with the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus, is hosting the 4pm to 7pm event in Dudley at The Village Hotel.

Jobs and training in engineering, customer service, warehouse and business administration are featured.

The science of fun at community gardens

A fun-filled day of science experiments will be taking place at community gardens in Dudley.

Jasmine Road Community Gardens will be hosting on a day of science-based activities on Saturday.

Everyone is invited along to take part in experiments, to find out about the chemistry of the soil, or use an electron microscope and find out about bugs with pond dipping.

There will also be music and drama at the event, which starts at 10am.

In the swing at park

AN afternoon of music from the swing era is being presented in a Dudley town centre park. The Friends of Priory Park and The Green are putting on the Easter Sunday event on March 27 from 2.30pm with The People's Orchestra will be performing music from Glenn Miller and other favourites.

Volunteers needed for new group library role

VOLUNTEERS will help take over the running of libraries and other services in Dudley under plans to save Dudley Council around £1.5 million over the next two years.

The cash-strapped authority is pressing ahead with the plans as it battles to cut £20m. The move would see the council save around 30 per cent – or £1,526,000 – by 2017/18 as part of the new arrangements.

Libraries, the borough's archives and adult learning services would all come under the new 'umbrella' organisation set up by the authority.

The group, known as a 'public service mutual', would run each of the departments as a not-for-profit organisation for an initial five-year period.

Consultation

A three-month long consultation has taken place with councillors to formalise arrangements in April for the new body to be set up.

The mutual is run by and for its members and employees who have a say in running the organisation. The move can result in a range of savings with including cuts of around £200,000 in business rates on properties.

A recruitment drive is under way for a voluntary chairman and treasurer with the council advertising the roles on the board.

Councillor Rachel Harris, who is overseeing the project, said: "It is intended that the mutual will go live in 2016."

Armed thieves steal shop cash

TWO armed robbers threatened staff at a Brierley Hill shop before making off with the takings.

The robbers, brandishing either baseball bats or pieces of wood, helped themselves to the till in One Stop Shop, on Turners Lane and demanded a staff member open the safe.

The pair then went around the back of the counter and emptied the till, before escaping on foot.

The raid happened at around 8.45pm on February 4 and Pc Dave Hackett said: "We believe the offenders could be local."

Anyone with information should contact Pc Hackett at Brierley Hill police station on 101 or email contactus@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Appeal is made for blood donors

BLOOD donors can attend a session at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on April 14, between 2pm and 3.30pm and between 4.30pm and 7.30pm.

Appointments can be booked on 0300 123 23 23 or at my.blood.co.uk

Car was sold in danger of exploding

THE boss of a Black Country car dealership has been jailed for selling dangerous vehicles which were unfit for the road.

The Lyde Green Motor Centre in Cradley sold cars which had numerous faults, including problems with brakes and steering, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. One car had the potential to explode, such was its dangerous state. The faults became clear almost immediately after they were purchased and buyers were 'given the runaround' as they tried to recoup their money.

Company director Mohammed Khabeer was jailed for a year after admitting six offences relating to unfair trading.

Recorder Barry Berlin told him he 'must have

known' about the dangerous condition the cars were in. Khabeer, aged 39, had previously been jailed for more than 30 offences relating to clocking cars. The recorder said Khabeer had not learned his lesson. The company, which is no longer trading, was also fined £21,000.

Complaints were made by two customers relating to a BMW X5 and a Saab which were purchased from the dealership on Lyde Green in December 2014. The BMW was bought for £12,800 and had numerous faults. The seats were loose, the headlights weren't working and the electrics were faulty.

The £1,900 Saab was in an even worse state. It pulled to the left and on further examination the suspension was found to be badly corroded. Problems with its exhaust meant carbon dioxide could have got into the passenger cabin and that the battery was insecure, which meant there a 'potential for explosion'.

The buyer of the BMW was turned away when he tried to get a refund, while another did manage to get his money back but only after being 'given the runaround'.

Sunit Sandhu, defending Khabeer, of Madison Avenue, Hodgehill, said the cars were bought by the company with MOT certificates and hundreds of other cars had been sold without any complaints. Recorder Berlin said the cars were 'in an appalling state and the people who bought them treated in an appalling way'.

Transformation of old hospital gets started

BUILDING work has started on more than 150 homes at a landmark former hospital site in Dudley.

After three months of preparations, developer Wates Living Space Homes got started on the former Guest Hospital site off Tipton Road.

Wates is working alongside Dudley Council and the Homes and Communities Agency to overhaul the site to provide new housing.

The scheme is being named Butler's Crescent in tribute to the renowned Black Country architect, Albert Thomas Butler, who was responsible for modifications to the hospital building.

The development will be made up of 127 new-build homes, 30 refurbished properties and the full restoration of the former porter's lodge.

Architect Armstrong Burton has designed the project and construction is due to be finished in the summer of 2019.

Wates managing director Joanne Jamieson said: "Commencing work on site brings to fruition years of careful planning and will see us deliver a significant project for Dudley that will provide high quality, affordable and energy efficient homes for the area. We will be using our presence to create training and employment opportunities for the local community and will draw on a network of local businesses from Dudley and the Black Country to help us deliver the scheme."

Impact

"It is our express intention to ensure our role in this exciting project not only results in new housing but also generates a sustainable economic impact for the borough."

Of the homes, 118 will be sold on the open market and 39 will be available for rent through Dudley Council.

Construction on the site, across the road from the Black Country Living Museum, comes after years of planning for homes on the site.

Seven years ago the hospital was taken off the hands of the NHS by the Homes and Communities Agency for houses. Four years ago Wates was appointed developer, but mine shafts and limestone works forced alterations to the project.

The hospital closed more than a decade ago after most departments moved to Russells Hall Hospital. It was built by the Earl of Dudley in 1849 for injured miners, before chainmaker Joseph Guest turned it into a general hospital.

The abandoned site was used by the makers of forthcoming horror movie *She Who Brings Gifts*, with Glenn Close and Gemma Arterton.



Work begins on clearing part of the former Guest Hospital, off Tipton Road, Dudley, for housing



A plan of housing for the site off Tipton Road



Official launch of the building work at the ex-hospital

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

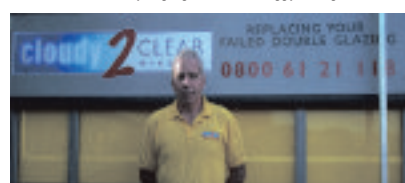
Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



So now the Met Office dictates the seasons

A FEW days ago, when we were being told to prepare for the coldest day of the year, and the early-morning frost was thick and cold, one of the weather forecasters on the radio commented that it seemed "more like spring than winter".

Well, there is good reason for this. For hundreds of years we have managed perfectly well using the Vernal Equinox, which usually falls around March 20-21, as the first day of spring. And then, a few years ago, the Met Office took it upon itself to move the date to March 1. On whose authority was this decision taken? Do you remember being consulted?

It seems the reason for the change was to make life a bit easier when it comes to recording data. Well, I'm sorry, the Met Office can record its data however it sees fit, but the weather forecasters have an overblown sense of their own importance if they think it falls to them to decide when our seasons start and end.

It would be almost as pompous as four local authorities taking it upon themselves to redefine the Black Country to suit their boundaries. Just as well that would never happen.

□□□

ON that subject, it wouldn't be March without our civic leaders heading to the South of France for the annual town-planning jamboree in Cannes. Funny it's never in Bilston, isn't it?

The latest plan is for a "Black Country Garden City", which sounds suspiciously like the 1960s New Town developments which brought us the unparalleled beauty of Skelmersdale and Milton Keynes.

Look, I'm all for transforming brown-field sites around the area to create much-needed housing. What I am less keen on is the idea of linking together 31 different and disparate communities to form a single "city", which will inevitably blur local identities, and possibly threaten our existing town centres which have taken enough of a kicking.

Could you imagine anyone merging Norwich and Ipswich together, to create an East Anglia Garden City? Or Newcastle, Durham and Sunderland? So why is it okay for us?

Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall and West Bromwich are all big and important enough to stand on their own two feet, at least if the will is there from the people who make the big decisions.

Instead of dreaming about garden cities, our leaders should be straining every sinew to ensure our existing towns and cities can compete on an equal footing with other parts of the country. And fighting for each of their very distinct identities.

Apparently, the garden city idea came from a competition entry which also suggested rebranding Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Sandwell under a single identity - Albion. Yes. That would have gone down well on the South Bank...



The Dunn family pictured in the early 1990s, before tragedy struck



Five-year-old Charlotte Dunn was killed in Dunblane 20 years ago



Cradley C of E Primary School is launching Charlotte's award

'We'll never get over losing our daughter'

A little girl whose life was taken 20 year ago is remembered at a Black Country school, **DAVID COSGROVE reports**

'WE lost a daughter and we will never recover from that'.

These are the heart-breaking words of Martyn Dunn, the father of a Black Country girl murdered in the Dunblane massacre 20 years ago.

As the nation remembers the 20th anniversary of the horrific shootings, the Cradley school where tragic young victim Charlotte Dunn once attended has now launched a prize in her memory.

Cradley C of E Primary School created the Charlotte Dunn Award after discussions with her parents. Charlotte, aged five, grew up in the Black Country and spent her reception year at Cradley C of E Primary before moving to Scotland with her family.

But just nine months later she was murdered alongside 15 other pupils and one teacher at Dunblane Primary School on March 13, 1996 when gunman Thomas Hamilton opened fire.

Cradley headteacher Marcia Harris, who taught Charlotte in reception, said: "The award will be a character award and will be given to a child who exemplifies our school values."

Remember

Charlotte had penned a letter to her former classmates just weeks before her life was cruelly snuffed out. This said how Charlotte loved her new teacher Gwen Mayor, who also died, almost as much as she loved her reception teacher at Cradley Marcia Harris, who is now the school's head.

Mrs Harris spoke of Charlotte as a bubbly, bright girl who was full of promise. She said: "We've got a lot of memories of her from the year she was with us."

"I had the privilege of being her first teacher and just remember her being a shining little star - that's absolutely what she was. Char-



Charlotte's parents Barbara and Martyn, returned to Scotland to be close to other Dunblane parents

lotte was shy, beautiful, had lots of friends and was a clever little girl. At the time she loved The Lion King.

"I remember Martyn used to be working in Scotland and used to travel back. One Friday afternoon she brought her dad to meet me because he was home early and I can remember how excited she was."

"What happened had a huge impact on the community here."

The school still sends flowers annually to mark Charlotte's birthday and the anniversary of the massacre. Prayers are held at the school every year on March 13 to give thanks for Charlotte's life.

Mrs Harris said she has become close friends with Mr and Mrs Dunn and chose to name her own daughter Emily Charlotte to pay tribute to her former pupil.

The new award will be presented by Char-

lotte's parents Barbara and Martyn at the school's Easter church service on the last day of term, Thursday, March 24.

Mr Dunn, 55, said the award would both honour his daughter's memory and reward the efforts of current children.

He said: "Twenty-one years ago Marcia was Charlotte's teacher and after the events of Dunblane she was in touch and very upset that one of her past children had been taken away from the world."

"Since then we've kept in touch and she has become a very close friend. She always remembers Charlotte and sends flowers for birthdays and anniversaries."

"It's nice that Cradley Primary still continues to remember Charlotte 20 years later and when we visited the children all knew who we were - Charlotte's mum and dad. We wanted to present an award in honour of Charlotte

and to reward some of the children from the school."

Mrs Harris added: "This year Barbara and Martyn came to see me at Christmas and said they would like to fund a Charlotte Dunn award. Teachers will put pupils' names forward and it will be based on character."

Charlotte, aged five, moved to Scotland with her family from their home in Apperley Way, Cradley.

Mr Dunn said the family will never fully recover from Charlotte's death but are continuing to move along the grieving process.

"It's terrible, we lost a daughter and we will never fully recover from that."

However, out of the tragedy Mrs Dunn said he and his wife had forged new friendships, particularly with Pamela and Kenny Ross, whose five-year-old daughter Joanna was also killed.

They were the last two couples left in a waiting room at Dunblane Primary to find out about their children's fate. That shared experience forged a special bond between the parents.

Following the massacre, which saw its 20th anniversary on Sunday, Mr Dunn, his wife and son Alex returned to the Midlands from Dunblane to Kidderminster. But just a year later they moved back to the Stirlingshire town - where they still live - to take advantage of the comfort provided by being close to the other bereaved families.

Ex-Scout leader Thomas Hamilton, 43, first cut the school's telephone wires before making his way to the gym hall armed with four legally-held handguns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

Inside the gym, 28 primary year one pupils were preparing for PE class as he entered and began shooting, killing 16 children and teacher Gwen Mayor and injuring 15 others. He then turned the gun on himself.

Dr Mick North, whose five-year-old daughter Sophie was killed, said the positive legacy should not be forgotten - that people are safer from gun crime. He said: "The 20th anniversary is a time when those too young to remember might learn about what happened and consider its significance. Handguns were banned - surely a legacy worth reflecting upon two decades later?"

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Immigration is key Euro issue

WATCHING young mothers talking to the media on TV about the in and out at Europe, most of them seemed to be coming down on the side of staying – the main concern being the economy.

I have to tell them that if the vote is staying in, their children will have difficulty finding a school place, the sick will find difficulty finding a hospital bed, the young who are looking for a home will find a home harder to obtain.

Better off out of EU machine

THE latest pro-EU spin story is that if we leave the EU, France will no longer process migrants that end and they will be allowed to just cross the channel unimpeded? What nonsense!

Once we are out of Europe, the 'freedom of movement' legislation will no longer apply, so anyone wishing to travel here will have their passport checked on departure and on arrival.

If they do not have the relevant visas/paperwork they will be put on the first boat back.

We will no longer be forced to 'take a quota' of refugees as we will be out of the EU machine.

We currently haemorrhage £50m per day into Europe. On leaving we could reinvest just two per cent of that into our own border control (making our borders the most secure and best-funded in Europe) and we would still be £49m a day better off!

Leave the EU = No more need for cuts and austerity.

It's a 'no brainer'!
M WILKES
Dudley

nursing home and everyone will find it harder to get a job.

That's because the overriding reason, above all else, to vote out is immigration. Staying in the European Union will mean our borders will still be open to hundreds of thousands from across Europe and beyond.

We buy more from Europe than they sell to us – and they will still want to sell to us.

J BROWN
Blackheath

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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EMAIL

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Tories vote to take £30 from disabled

I WAS brought up in the belief that politicians were meant to help and do good for people. How wrong I was!

I feel outraged that my Member of Parliament for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, James Morris, has just voted along with his Conservative Party to cut benefit to the disabled by £30 per week.

To get this miserable, evil act to become law the Tories, after being defeated twice in the House of Lords, forced it through claiming 'financial privilege' as the Commons have the final say on budgetary measures.

To pick upon the most vulnerable in society like this is, to me, despicable, but sadly firmly in line with

Tory philosophy of hammering the most vulnerable.

Mr Morris, who started a petition in a bid to stop closure of the police station, seems to be under the illusion that cuts have nothing to do with him when they are in his own area. However, we see the real James Morris as he votes for cuts to the disabled. It takes my breath away. It wasn't so long ago, in July 2015 that MPs took a £7,000 pay rise and here they are now taking £30 pounds from disabled people.

Nye Bevan, the founder of the National Health Service, famously said: "So far as I am concerned Tories are lower than vermin."

C STOLL
Halesowen

First beggar in our village

I HAVE lived in Coseley for a few years and I love it.

I go into Roseville daily to do my bit of shopping as I like to support my local shops.

On my visit there today, I parked the car up, got my veg and proceeded to walk down the street to get other items of shopping.

What I saw shocked me – a beggar sat in the street who asked me for money, I could not believe it, I have never seen this before in our little village.

I have seen this in Wolverhampton and Birmingham – they are cities and you unfortunately expect it. But Roseville! It cut me to the core.

I empathize with people who are perhaps homeless. But where are the community police officers that I used to see regularly? We do not need this.

D WOOD
Coseley

'Mom' still the word for me

SOME years ago I was at a writers' weekend in Sussex with editors of a magazine I had been contributing to.

Each writer had to write a story to be discussed.

The only criticism my story had was that I had called my main character 'mom'.

It was even suggested that I had done this deliberately to draw the attention of the editors of the American edition, who were also present.

Well, it's always been 'mom' in my family and every other family I have known. 'Mom's the word'.

O HYETT
Dudley

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The junction with the Birmingham Canal Navigations at Aldersley



Narrowboats at the Bonded Warehouse, Stourbridge



The Railway Bridge over the canal at Tettenhall



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Staffs & Worcs canal at Compton about 100 years ago

Lock where first earth was dug for canal link

IN 1766, exactly 250 years ago, a spade was thrust into the ground at Compton, and construction of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal began.

The Act of Parliament authorising this important link between the East coast via the River Trent, and the West coast via the River Severn, was passed on May 14, 1766, and work began soon after.

The first earth was dug at Compton lock, on what is the highest level of the canal.

The overall supervisor of the canal was James Brindley, who had built the Duke of Bridgewater's canal in Lancashire, and was also constructing the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Brindley was born in 1716, near Leek, and thus this year is the 300th anniversary of his

MEMORY LANE

birth. The actual construction of the canal was given to one of Brindley's pupil assistants, Thomas Dadford, who had been born near Stourton but was living in Wolverhampton at the time.

He and his sons went on to become major canal engineers in their own right.

The canal opened in 1772, as did the Birmingham Canal Navigations, which linked with it at Aldersley, rising through 21 locks to the centre of the City and onwards throughout the Black Country and Birmingham.

For the first time the coal and iron products of the region could be exported in bulk throughout the country, and

the world, and the industrial revolution was facilitated.

The canal reached the River Severn at Stourport, and at its other end joined the Trent & Mersey Canal at Great Heywood. Soon afterwards the Shropshire Union Canal to the North West also linked with the Staffs & Worcs, at Autherley Junction, half a mile from Aldersley and an important waterways crossroads was created.

The Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre, which sits only yards from the canal is planning an exhibition to celebrate the 250th anniversary and is seeking to borrow any related artefacts to add to its own small collection.

Open every Sunday, the Heritage Centre offers a free map for a self guided walk around the adjacent historic sites.



James Brindley who was canal pioneer

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No jail for teacher who had child pornography

A PERVERT headteacher who had 'disgusting' child pornography on his computer has walked free from court.

Ross Workman, aged 51, the former head of Oldswinford CoE Primary School in Stourbridge, had more than 500 images – 88 of which were placed in the worst category by police.

Despite this, he was given a community order and walked free from the dock at Wolverhampton Crown Court last Wednesday.

The images – branded 'disgusting' by Judge James Burbidge QC – featured youngsters aged between eight and 12. They had been downloaded by Workman between January 5 and March 7, 2011, before he became headteacher and while he was taking a three-and-a-half-year break from the profession.

Deleted

He had deleted all the images by the time the house in Orwell Close, Stourbridge – where he lived alone – was visited by the police from the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team.

They seized his computer equipment for analysis on November 3, 2014, and had specialist equipment to retrieve deleted pictures and videos. He was not charged until January 4 this year and left his post on January 31.

Mr Nicholas Berry, prosecuting, said: "He said he regarded pornography as a stress reliever and looked at it most days. He admitted going through a phase of looking at indecent images of children. He said he knew it was wrong and tried to stop."

Miss Judith Kenney, defending, said: "He has paid a huge price for something he did a long time ago when his life was in turmoil. He is highly remorseful."



Judge Burbidge said teacher Ross Workman had lost the job he loved

Workman, of Low Fold Close, Worcester, admitted six charges of making an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child. He was given a three-year community order on condition he completes a sex offender treatment programme, was put on the Sex Offenders Register and banned from working with children.

Judge Burbidge told him: "You are an intelligent man described as honest, open, kind and considerate but clearly you had a secret for some period in your life. You downloaded disgusting

images but did not continue to view them. Your arrest came at a time when you taught children and were in a position of trust. One can only wonder what the parents thought, but there is no suggestion you breached that trust. You acted entirely appropriately while a headteacher."

He told Workman when giving him the community order: "I am able to do this because of the punishment you already received in losing the job you loved – and you gave up this practice before your arrest."

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Roadshow looks at crime of exploitation

ORGANISATIONS across Dudley have joined forces to highlight the dangers of child sexual exploitation (CSE), as the national awareness day approaches.

In support of the national day tomorrow (Friday, March 18), Dudley Council's CSE team is working with groups from across the borough's voluntary sector to deliver a roadshow to help keep children safe by profiling the crime.

The promotional stand will be in place in Sedgley town centre today (Thursday) and in Halesowen town centre tomorrow.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, said: "It's great to see organisations across our borough joining together to tackle such a serious issue. Child sexual exploitation is the most heinous of crimes and it can affect any child from any background in any area. It involves perpetrators grooming their victims by gaining their trust before emotionally and sexually abusing them. Every parent, professional and young person should know the signs of CSE and this roadshow will hopefully raise awareness of these."

Cruiser ban extended for two more years

AN INJUNCTION which has banned car cruising in the Black Country will be allowed to continue after a hearing in the High Court.

The introduction of the injunction in February 2015 has significantly reduced the problem and eradicated it altogether in many areas, The High Court, sitting in Birmingham, heard.

The Black Country-wide injunction bans drivers from taking part in a car cruise anywhere within Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall – or from promoting, organising or publicising any such event in those areas.

When the injunction was granted by the High Court in December 2014, His Honour Judge Owen directed there should be a review hearing 12 months after its implementation, at which the court would consider the effect of the injunction and decide whether it should be continued to February 2018.

Last week the court permitted the continuation of the injunction.

Reduction

In evidence presented to the court, Joanne Mason of Wolverhampton's anti social behaviour team said: "There has been a significant reduction in car cruising activity across the Black Country since the injunction came into force.

"There is overwhelming support for the continuation of the injunction from local residents and businesses. It is vital the injunction remains in force to enable police and the four Black Country councils to continue to tackle the dangerous, anti-social and nuisance behaviour of car cruising."

Before the injunction came into force there were a number of hotspots around the region including the Black Country Route near Bilston and Birmingham New Road on the border of



Chief Inspector Jed White

Wolverhampton and Dudley. Drivers and spectators had turned these local roads into a race track.

As well as deterring would-be car cruisers from gathering, four people who took part in car cruises have been convicted for contempt of court for breaching the injunction, with a further eight prosecutions pending.

Chief Inspector Jed White, of West Midlands Police, said: "Street racing is completely unacceptable and won't be tolerated. West Midlands Police welcome the extension of the ground-breaking ban on car cruisers.

"The injunction enables us, together with our partners, to continue to tackle those individuals who flout the laws of the road and pose a danger for innocent members of the public.

"The force recently launched Operation Hercules, a campaign which sees traffic officers patrolling major trunk roads popular with car cruisers, on the look-out for speeders and

Publishing tips at talk

DUDLEY Writers' Network is holding an event for authors to find out how to independently self publish.

Surgeon Andrew Slater, who has had two books published this way, will be giving advice in a talk at Kingswinford Library on Saturday, March 26, at 10.30am.

Places for the free event need to be reserved by calling the library on (01384) 812740.

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Driver in tragic crash 'must have dozed off'

A POSTMAN who caused the death of a father-of-eight by careless driving must have dozed off at the wheel before the crash, a court heard.

Sajid Hussain, aged 36, from Black-acre Road, Dudley, was at the wheel of a red Volkswagen Polo that struck 47-year-old David Hinton as he was putting one of his children into his green Peugeot 206 on a Dudley street.

Hussain had not eaten for ten and a half hours as he had been observing Ramadan.

The accident happened at Oakham Road, near to its junction with Tansley Hill Road, on June 20 last year. Mr Hinton, from Halesowen, died in hospital the following day. Mr Hinton's children and 34-year-old wife Nadine were treated for minor injuries.

Hussain at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week was handed an eight-month jail term suspended for two years and ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work. He was banned from driving for three years and will face an extended re-test before he can get behind the wheel again.

Mr Simon Ward, prosecuting, said that 'the only conclusion' for Hussain veering into Mr Hinton's parked car at around 2pm was 'that he must have dozed off'. His vehicle was travelling around the 30mph speed limit.

A personal statement from Mrs Hinton, read out in court, stated that 'the children are struggling to come to terms with the loss of their father'.

Miss Samantha Powis, defending, said Hussain was a 'respectable, hard-working, law-abiding man', adding: 'He doesn't remember feeling tired. He is absolutely horrified at what he has done.'

The court heard Hussain had not eaten any food since 3.30am on the day of the crash. A medical examination found no abnormalities which would have explained him blacking out.



Sajid Hussain 'horrified' by the tragedy



Halesowen father-of-eight David Hinton

Man died after fall in Qatar

A BUILDER from Kingswinford died after falling from a first-floor window of an apartment in Qatar.

David Allport, aged 57, of Larch Road, had been working in the Middle Eastern country. He was in a coma for six weeks, and looked to be improving but then he suffered internal bleeding. His life support machine was switched off when it became apparent there more could be done to save him.

David Reid, assistant coroner for Worcestershire, told Worcester Cor-

oner's Court: "He was staying in an apartment. It is a very hot country, and the air conditioning wasn't working. It appears that he went to open an already open window, where there was no railing to stop him falling."

Mr Allport died on October 11 last year. Cause of death was cardiac arrest as a result of septic shock.

Mr Reid said: "The evidence is so lacking it is impossible to come to a conclusion on the balance of probability. I record an open conclusion."

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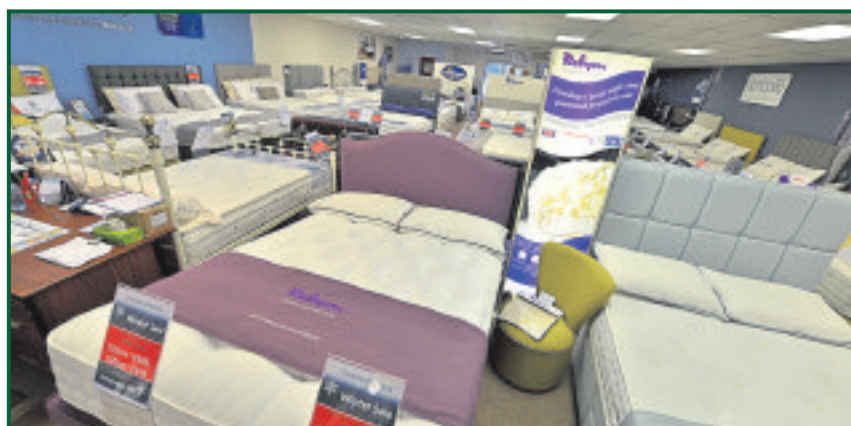
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Myths and legends inspire Dean's art



Never give up – Wordsley artist and former Wolverhampton University student Dean Melbourne at work in his studio

AN ARTIST who lives by the motto ‘never give up’ recently had a second solo show in a major London gallery as his work is being sought by collectors.

Former Wolverhampton University student Dean Melbourne, from Wordsley, has enjoyed success after selling his work to collectors in New York, Miami and Barcelona.

But the 39-year-old painter is only too aware how difficult it can be to earn a living from art. He said: “I’ve always painted and I’ve never given up. That’s a message I want to pass on to people who are being creative but can’t quite visualise how that might translate into a career in the arts.” To see his work visit www.deanmelbourne.com

New recruits boost college

HALESOWEN College is recruiting teaching staff in 17 departments as bosses aim to enhance training in the region.

Vacancies are to be filled in accounting, animal care, bakery, beauty therapy, catering and childcare among other areas. It comes as the college recently announced record numbers of students progressing to university.

Principal Keith Bate said: “The vast majority of teaching staff at the college have progressed their careers through training within the organisation and many have been promoted to senior teaching and management jobs.

“As a large local employer it is incumbent on us to invest in the local economy and enhance education and training possibilities for local people that would not otherwise be available.”

He added: “A key aim of the organisation is to be the leading centre for training in education and learning within the region and with this in mind new job and training opportunities are planned for September 2016.”

Halesowen College is holding an open day on Saturday, from 10am to 2pm, at the Whittingham Road campus with celebrations harking back 50 years to the college’s beginnings in 1966.

Express & Star

Design an Ad

COMPETITION

The Express & Star is challenging local primary schools to design adverts in our ‘Design an Ad’ Competition.

We need all interested Headteachers/Teachers to register today, using the coupon below or by email, to be included in this exciting competition.

Each school will be given an advertiser by the Express & Star and asked to come up with a ground breaking original ad to feature an 8-page colour supplement, published in-paper on Thursday 28th April 2016.

Winning pupils will be invited to a special presentation ceremony to be held later in the year.



Interested?

Then complete the coupon below to register your school's interest and send to:
Jo Watton, Business Development Department, Express and Star Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES
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Closing date for registering is Saturday 26th March 2016

Any queries? Phone 01902 319671 or 01902 319134

Register here today!

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An Express & Star supplement

Express & Star

So Grand! Curtain up on the new look for theatre

WITH its sleek seating and swanky bars, these pictures show the new look planned for Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre.

Artist's impressions show the theatre-goers what they can expect after the venue undergoes an £800,000 revamp.

And, as these pictures show, visitors can enjoy a drink in intimate boothed seating, while the new-look bar has a sophisticated and modern look.

The work will take place during the Grand's annual summer dark period - the time when the theatre closes - and will therefore not affect the line-up of entertainment in the planned season.



The booths in the dress circle will bring a sophisticated look



Chance to enjoy a relaxing drink in the new dress circle bar

Highlight

And the new pictures have been revealed as the venue announced a new season of West End musicals, dramas, dance and concerts. Theatre fans were queuing out the doors when the shows went on sale to Friends of the Grand.

Some people waited over an hour to get their hands on the hottest tickets in town ahead of the general public, with Tony Christie, Jimmy Osmond, The Stylistics, Maxwell Caulfield and Joe McElderry just some of the big names heading to the stage this summer and autumn.

And the highlight of the season will be a concert to celebrate the reopening after the renovation work. A Spectacular Gala Night At The Grand, a version of a night at the proms, will be held on September 10.

The City Concert Orchestra will be led by the theatre's own chief executive, Adrian Jackson. Tickets are already on sale for Guys and Dolls in July while The Sound of Music will run from October 4 to 8.

Call 01902 429 212, or book tickets online at www.grandtheatre.co.uk

The 1975 reinvent 1980s-style pop

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

'EVERYTHING has been done,' says frontman of The 1975 Matty Healy, so for their second album the Wilmslow boys seem to have gone back to reinvent the 1980s.

Acts like Duran Duran, INXS, The Police, Hall & Oates cast a shadow over the pretentiously entitled **I Like It When You Sleep, For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It**.

But there is no denying the popular appeal of songs like The Sound and This Must Be The Dream, whilst they out-Bieber Justin himself on Loving Someone.

The ambient sub-Sigur Ros interludes are dispensable, and the ballad Nana is mawkish.

Having topped the charts on both sides of the Atlantic, expect a triumphant tone when **The 1975** play the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham on Tuesday, March 22.

Get your rocks off with **Primal Scream**, the Screamadellica outfit are back with more gospel-infused pseudo-Stones rock on 11th studio album **Chaosmosis**.

Bobby Gillespie and co hit the ground running with the shuffle beat and jazzy piano on the bongo-beating opener 'Trippin' On Your Love. Guests on the album include Haim, Sky Ferreira and Rachel Zeffira from Cat's Eyes.

But it soon becomes apparent the Chaosmosis is missing a monster track, a Rocks. However, the groovy Golden Rope comes close.

Iggy Pop seems to be at his best when he has collaborators to nudge him in the right direction, whether it be The Stooges in the 60s or David Bowie in the 70s. So it is with new album **Post Pop Depression**, conceived in the desert with Josh Homme from Queens Of The Stone Age.



The 1975 have topped the album charts on both sides of the Atlantic

This is this godfather of punk at his most melancholy and melodic, his rock god voice rumbling added gravitas to the instantly appealing tracks Break Into Your Heart and Gardenia. Just when you think he has mellowed, he brings some wry humour to Chocolate Drops and ends Paraguay with a rant.

Arranging Time, the sixth album from LA singer-songwriter **Peter Dinklage**, is a classy set of songs from an accomplished artist who has flown under the radar for too long.

His wistful Americana with subtle touches of synth deserve a big audience, especially for such lovely tracks as Halifax and Tomorrow.

Other highlights include the dream pop of She Was Weird and the rocking In Your Head.

The Coral make a triumphant return after a five-year hiatus with their eighth studio album, **Distance Inbetween**, an exercise in classic, timeless psychedelic pop-rock.

In the melodic Merseyside tradition of Echo and The Bunnymen and The Teardrop Explodes, the album was re-

corded at Liverpool's Parr Street Studio and the band fronted by singer/guitarist James Skelly have been joined by guitarist Paul Molloy, formerly of The Zutons.

Highlights include the harmonious pop of Miss Fortune and the harder edged Million Eyes and Fear Machine. It's certainly an impressive comeback.

Electronic duo **Underworld**, featuring Rick Smith and Worcester's Karl Hyde, are back with their seventh album **Barbara Barbara, We Face A Shining Future**, their first new music since that composed for the London Olympics Opening Ceremony.

From the percussive thud and spoken lyrics of opener Exhale, we are in familiar territory for anyone whose formative years were spent listening to Born Slippy on a loop.

It continues with the menacing techno of If Rah, the blissful sweep of Low Burn, mysterious orientalism of Santiago Cuatro, the meditative Motorhome, out-and-out dancer Ova Nova and gorgeous epic finale Nylon Strung.

Thieves hit charity for ex-offenders

THIEVES have stolen thousands of pounds worth of equipment from a Kingswinford charity that helps ex-offenders get their lives back on track.

Steve Tracey from Good News Recycling said he had been left 'heart-broken' by the raid.

He discovered the building had been targeted when he went to open the centre in Stallings Lane on Monday morning (March 7).

The raiders had forced their way inside after cutting a padlock off the gate and smashing a window at the rear of the building.

Power tools, £360 of charity money and two laptops were also taken between 8pm on the Sunday and 7am Monday.

Skills

The charity is linked with Dudley Police's Offender Management Team so former offenders can use their skills to renovate furniture that can then be sold to help vulnerable people.

Mr Tracey, 48, who set up the business six years ago, said: "I couldn't believe that when I opened up the following day everything was trashed and all our tools and equipment had gone.

"Myself and my business partner, Luke Thomas, were mortified to see the damage done. We made a list of all the equipment taken so far and we think we have a total of about £15,000 worth. This includes grinders, generators, hedgecutters, lawn mowers, saws and cordless drills.

"It is absolutely heartbreaking for us - it has meant we have had to cancel community jobs such as house clearances and gardening for the elderly. These thieves have robbed the poor to give to themselves."

Mr Tracey is now appealing for donations that would help them get back on their feet.

He added: "We would be so grateful if anyone could donate any electrical equipment, money or just their time to help us continue to help others."

"We work alongside ex-offenders as we believe they can work alongside us and benefit the community - which they have been doing."

To donate call Good News Recycling on 01384400596 or 07708830576 or visit their Facebook page.

Anyone with information about the burglary is asked to call Dudley Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Boss Steve Tracey pictured after the burglars broke into Good News Recycling, Kingswinford

History talks on the deadly First World War Zeppelin raids

THE 100th anniversary of the devastating Black Country Zeppelin raids will be the subject of a history talk on Thursday, March 24.

Historian Ian Bott will be speaking to members of Clent History Society.

On January 31 nine German Zeppelin airships set out on a mission to bomb Liverpool but two became lost and dropped their bombs instead across Tipton, Bradley, Wednesbury and Walsall.

Seventy people died that night which was one of the deadliest air raids of the First World War.

The talk will be held in Clent Parish Hall, Church Avenue, from 8pm and everyone is welcome to attend.

Admission for non-members is £2.50, which includes tea, coffee and biscuits.

For details call society secretary Carole Hodgson on 01562 885759.

Meanwhile, the Titanic's Midlands connections will be raised at the next meeting of the Wyre Forest Historical Research Group.

Andrew Lound will be giving a talk on the ill-fated liner at Kidderminster Town Hall on Tuesday.

The group's publicity officer Gay Hill said: "Many people know that the Titanic's anchor was made by Hingley's in Cradley Heath but many more Midland firms contributed to the ship's luxurious fixtures and fittings."

Everyone is welcome to attend the talk. There is a small entry fee which includes refreshments. For more information call 07854378945 or email wfhr@hotmail.co.uk

School was let down by small group of pupils

A DUDLEY secondary school has been told it needs to improve after inspectors raised concerns over the slow progress of pupils and classroom behaviour.

Castle High School and Visual Arts College in St James's Road was given an overall rating of 'requires improvement' after an inspection last month.

Ofsted said that too few pupils made the progress expected of them last year, especially in maths and science, while the number of pupils achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including in English and maths, was 'too low'.

In his report lead inspector Rob Hackfath said that a small number of pupils 'make poor choices regarding their conduct' in lessons.

"This remains a concern of some staff, parents and pupils," he said.

"Inspectors observed inattention, chatting and some disruption to learning in a few lessons, usually because the work set was not engaging or did not have sufficient challenge.

Punctual

"Leaders have an effective behaviour management system in place, but this is not applied consistently by all teachers."

The report noted that the 'vast majority' of pupils were punctual but some lateness to lessons was observed.

Headteacher Michelle King said: "Whilst inspectors have said that the behaviour of students requires improvement, this is in the

Beer, cider and rugby

A STOURBRIDGE brewery will be offering a choice of 25 ales at its three-day beer festival. Green Duck Brewery will also have up to 15 ciders at its brewery tap The Badelynge Bar in Rufford Road on the Gainsborough Trading Estate.

The festival will run from 4pm to 11pm today (Thursday), 1pm to 11pm on Friday and Saturday. Six Nations rugby matches will be shown on a big screen on Saturday.

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Heading out into the Dandenong Ranges, that overlook Melbourne, take a ride through the lush mountainside from Belgrave to Emerald Lakeside on the historic 'Puffing Billy' steam train.

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Admire the sun setting below Uluru on the distant horizon and the following day experience the first rays as it rises, before taking a guided 'Mala' walk around a section of the base.

Join the Kuranda Scenic Railway in Cairns for an amazing ride through dense tropical rainforests returning to the coast via the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway.

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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: July 16



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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: November 12



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DAYS: 4 DEPARTS: September 22



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£59

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DAYS: 1 DEPARTS: Aug 28, Sept 29



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DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: May 15, Sept 25



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DAYS: 8 DEPARTS: Various dates May to October



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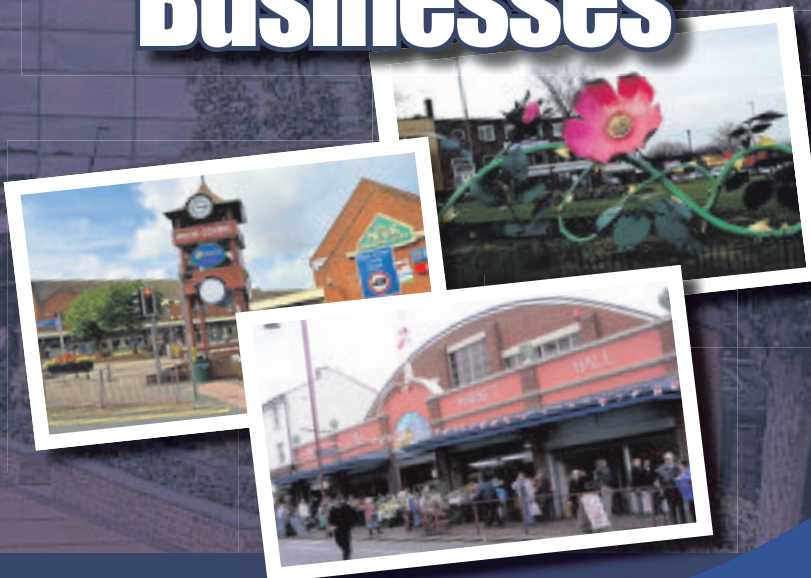
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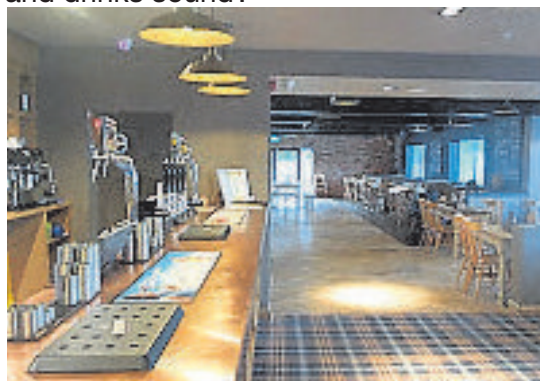
This Friday, 18th March, Jaroslav and his team welcome you all to their 'Official Re-Launch Party' where once again they will exceed all expectations and deliver a brand new menu better than its predecessor - how it's possible we don't know!

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Little Mix – Page 27

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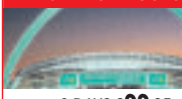
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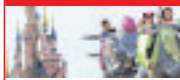
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Peter Andre



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Gwyneth Herbert



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The 1975

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Tony Mortimer And His Band

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Symphony Hall,
Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Emmy The Great

Sat at 6.30pm,
The Institute, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Ellie Goulding

Mon at 7.30pm,
£33.20 - £35.70
Barclaycard Arena,
Birmingham, B1 2AA.
Call 0121 780 4141

Life Of Agony

Fri at 7pm, £20
Wolverhampton Slade Rooms,
WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

Laetitia Sadier & Nicholas Krgovich

Wed at 7.30pm,
Hare & Hounds,
Kings Heath, Birmingham,
B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Stereo MCs

Fri at 6.30pm, £17
The Institute, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

The Three Degrees

Sat at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

ACOUSTIC & FOLK

Kelly Oliver

Mon at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Nathan Carter

Mon at 7.30pm, £24
Prince Of Wales Centre,
Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

JAZZ & BLUES

Mike Sanchez And His Band

Fri at 9.30pm,
The Jam House,
Birmingham, B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

Sax In The City: The Notebenders

Sat at 1.30pm,
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Chetham's School Of Music

Fri at 1.10pm,
Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham,
B15 2TS. Call 0121 414 7333

Ex Cathedra: JS Bach's St John Passion

Sat at 5pm - 7.30pm,
£9.50 - £35
Birmingham Cathedral,
B3 2QB. Call 0121 262 1840

THEATRE

Horrible Histories: Groovy Greeks

Tue at 10.30am, Wed at 1.30pm,
Thu at 10.30am,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Horrible Histories: Incredible Invaders

Tue at 1.30pm, Wed at 10.30am,
Thu at 1.30pm,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

42nd Street

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,
7.30pm,
The Rose Theatre,
Kidderminster, DY10 2RX.
Call 01562 743745

Goodnight Mister Tom

Fri at 7pm, Sat at 2.30pm,
7pm,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Fake It 'Til You Make It

Wed at 8pm, Thu at 8pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Tinned Goods

Fri at 7.30pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Equality Street

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at
7.30pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Ireland's Call

Thu at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

The Best Thing

Fri at 8pm - 10pm,
mac, Cannon Hill Road,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Made In The Midlands: Young REP

Wed at 7pm, Thu at 7pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Fame: The Musical: Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,
7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Anger Management: Young REP

Mon at 7pm, Tue at 7pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Russian State Ballet Of Siberia: The Snow Maiden

Sun at 4pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Russian State Ballet Of Siberia: Sleeping Beauty

Mon at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

The Russian State Ballet Of Siberia: Swan Lake

Tue at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Iphigenia In Sploot

Fri at 8pm, Sat at 2.30pm,
8pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

The Government Inspector

Sat at 7.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm,
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7pm, Thu
at 2pm, 7.30pm,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Mary Poppins

Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm,
7.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm, Tue at
7.30pm, Wed at 2pm, 7.30pm,
Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm,
£25.55 - £30.60
Birmingham Hippodrome,
B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

Brendan Cole: A Night To Remember

Sun at 7.30pm, £19.50 -
£39.50
Symphony Hall,
Birmingham, B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

COMEDY

Mark Thomas: Trespass

Sat at 7.30pm, £14 - £15
Lichfield Garrick,
WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

Joe Lycett: That's The Way, A-Ha A-Ha, Joe Lycett

Sun at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
The Glee Club,
Birmingham, B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

TALKS

Gordon Buchanan – Lost Adventures

Thu at 7.30pm,
Lichfield Garrick,
WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

OTHER EVENTS

Sewing For Pleasure & Fashion Embroidery & Stitch

Fri at 9.30am - 5.30pm, Sun at
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The NEC Birmingham,
B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

Cake International

Fri at 9.30am - 5.30pm, Sat at
9.30am - 5.30pm, Sun at 9.30am
- 5.30pm,
The NEC Birmingham,
B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Little Mix girls are thinking big now

THEIR first show proved so popular that Little Mix had to add an extra date at Birmingham's Genting Arena.

The British all-girl group – Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirlwall and Leigh-Anne Pinnock – will play on Friday, March 18, and return on Sunday, April 3.

They've enjoyed a heady rise after forming exclusively for the eighth series of The X Factor in 2011.

The band signed with Simon Cowell's Syco Music and released a winner's single, a cover of Damien Rice's Cannonball. Since then, they've barely been out of the headlines.

Their debut album, DNA, sold almost 400,000 copies, while the follow-up, Salute, did almost as well. The band's most recent album, Get Weird, has been their biggest seller to date, notching up almost half a million sales. It features the hits Black Magic and Love Me Like You.

"We had a lot of fun when we wrote this album," says Edwards. "We've been writing it for a year. [The album is] very fun, very colourful, very pop."

"There's ballads, there's brilliant pop songs, there's a bit of R&B in there," adds Thirlwall. "There's something for everyone."

Little Mix worked on the album with Jess Glynne. "When we wrote the album we were getting so stressed about what it would sound like," Nelson explains. "Then we just thought, let's just write what we want to do and have fun with this album. Jess was so much fun to work with."

Thirlwall adds: "Jess did 'I Want' with us as well. She came in at a piv-



Latest Little Mix album, Get Weird, which has sold more than half a million copies

otal moment, and it's an emotional song for us, and it's really honest and it gets you right there."

Little Mix also became friends with One Direction, who also found fame on The X Factor. "How amazing to know that they're a phenomenon and to be like, 'Boys – we've done well, ha-

ven't we? Let's have a break,'" says Pinnock.

Not that Little Mix don't ever want to stop," Edwards adds. "We always want more. We want to go to Madison Square Garden and achieve everything."

Bob's your uncle, Robin

HIS uncle's one of the most famous actors in the business. But Robin Morrissey isn't trying to follow in Stafford-born Neil Morrissey's footsteps. He doesn't hanker for the starring role in a 2016 equivalent of Men Behaving Badly, he's no designs on becoming Bob The Builder either.

Instead Morrissey has been slowly building up an impressive string of acting credits, featuring in Cloud Atlas, Love Bite and Fracture among others.

Morrissey, however, is in no doubt that his family has been instrumental as he's begun to make his way. "My uncle has been an enormous help," he says. "He's been amazing. He's a brilliant man and has been helpful in terms of helping me to understand what an actor's life is. I can't say enough about how helpful he's been. My immediate family is also very supportive."

Morrissey has been hard at work for a new Birmingham Repertory Theatre production of Nikolai Gogol's The Government Inspector, slated at the Centenary Square theatre from Saturday, March 19, until March 26.

The play is set in a small provincial Russian town. Morrissey takes up the story: "It's a very corrupt town and the officials are pocketing a lot of money. They probably have to because there is nothing else there. Everything that gets sent from St Petersburg to build churches goes into their pockets. The Government inspector is leaving to inspect the small town and the officials there are in danger of being sent to Siberia."

Morrissey immersed himself in the works of Gogol before signing up, saying: "Gogol's a fascinating character. There are a lot of parallels with today's society. When you have a script as good as this it makes the job a lot easier."



'My uncle has been an enormous help'

Mega-stars are on way to the arena

THE mega-stars are on their way to the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham.

On Sunday Mariah Carey brings her Sweet Sweet Fantasy tour, her first in Europe for 13 years, to the city centre arena. Guitar hero Joe Bonamassa plays on Saturday and Brit-winner Ellie Goulding, enjoying considerable success with third album Delirium, plays on Monday with support from John Newman.

The 1975 brings songs of Chocolate and Girls on Tuesday. Their second album is entitled I Like It When You Sleep For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It – longest name ever for a US chart-topping album.

Band celebrate 30 Wonder Stuff years

THE Wonder Stuff are on the road celebrating 30 years since they got together in the Black Country and play Birmingham O2 Academy on Saturday.

Fronted by Miles Hunt, they release debut The Eight Legged Groove Machine in 1988 (first of nine studio albums) and had hits with Circlesquare, The Size of a Cow, Welcome to the Cheap Seats and, with Vic Reeves, a chart-topping cover of Dizzy. Highlights included their Big Day Out homecoming concert at Walsall's Bescot Stadium in 1991 and headlining the Phoenix Festival in 1994.

Support at Birmingham includes The Wedding Present.

Brum rising stars in five-band show

BIRMINGHAM'S next big thing Hankks launch their new EP at the O2 Institute in Digbeth tomorrow night (Friday) with support from The Assist, Faith, Pollen and Giant Elf Pist.

Sussex punk trio Traams recall Tubeway Army and early Cure on their recently released second album Modern Dancing and will be in concert tonight (Thursday) at the Hare and Hounds, Kings Heath. At the same venue, Bad Seeds and Grinderman drummer Jim Sclavunos joins Joe Gideon for songs from his Versa Vice album on Sunday, Berlin punks Diat play Tuesday and Stereolab's Laetitia Sadier Wednesday.

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EVENTS

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We also hold a popular music festival a couple of times a year and plans are underway to create a Folk/Jazz club in the cellar bar (musicians get in touch!).

Here's what a typical week entails at the Samson and Lion of Stourbridge.

BAND REHEARSALS / MEETING ROOM
FUNCTION ROOM FOR HIRE

Fridays
Karaoke unless function prohibits.

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Bonus Ball Pay-out and many functions.

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CHOICE



Michael Jackson

Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to Off the Wall (BBC2, 9pm)
Spike Lee's documentary charting the path of the King of Pop's career through to the release of Off the Wall, the 1979 project that broke records, and propelled Michael to international stardom. Lee's investigation begins in the early days of Jackson's time in the limelight, from his work with his brothers and his solo outings, and details how the Jackson boys' success led them to leave Motown. Includes contributions by Berry Gordy, Questlove, and Philly International Records founders Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who produced the Jackson brothers' first two non-Motown albums, resulting in their first platinum single.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) 12.00 BBC News; Weather. 12.10 Football Focus. 12.50 Saturday Sportsday. 1.00 Athletics. 2.00 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Wales v Italy (Kick-off 2.30pm). 4.30 Final Score. 5.15 Dynamo: Magician Impossible. 5.45 Celebrity Mastermind. (R) 6.15 BBC News. 6.25 Regional Programme. 6.30 Pointless Celebrities. New series. Simon Day, Paul Chowdhry, Emily Attack, Ian Lavender, Kerry Godliman, Graeme Garden, Steve Pemberton and Bob Mortimer take part in a special edition of the quiz. 7.20 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. France v England (Kick-off 8.00pm). John Inverdale presents from the Stade de France, where this year's tournament reaches its conclusion. There is a chance that this fixture will decide the destination of the title, with England still in with an excellent chance following victories in their opening three matches against Scotland, Italy and Ireland. The meeting between the nations on the final day last year was a thriller from start to finish, with England knowing they needed to win by 26 points or more to clinch the title, and after a match that produced no less than 12 tries, they fell agonisingly short despite their record-breaking 55-35 victory. With Les Bleus still seemingly incapable of stringing together two consecutive positive displays, Eddie Jones will be confident of ending his first tournament in charge of England on a high, even if ultimately the title doesn't come his side's way. 10.00 The National Lottery Live. Gaby Roslin hosts as the all-important winning Lotto and Thunderball numbers are revealed. 10.10 BBC News; Weather. 10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Everton v Arsenal at Goodison Park and Crystal Palace v Leicester City at Selhurst Park; National Lottery Update. 11.50 Film: The Uninvited. (2009) Thriller, starring Emily Browning. 1.15 Film: Wake Wood. (2010) 2.40 Weather for the Week Ahead. 2.45 BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Film: The Big Sky. (1952) 8.35 Film: Forbidden Planet. (1956) 10.10 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 11.10 Natural World: Spectacled Bears – Shadows of the Forest. (R) 12.00 Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul. (R) 1.00 The Best Dishes Ever. (R) 1.30 Escape to the Country. (R) 2.20 Film: The Red Shoes. (1948) Powell and Pressburger's drama, starring Moira Shearer. 4.30 Flog It! (R) 5.30 Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) 6.30 Gardeners' World. Monty Don begins to sow annual climbers and gets started on tidying and mulching his borders, while Joe Swift reveals how and when to prune trees. (R) 7.00 Celebrity Antiques Road Trip. TV presenters Johnny Ball and John Craven embark on a quest to unearth collectibles in Hampshire and Dorset, with help from experts Charles Hanson and Philip Serrell. (R) 8.00 Perry and Croft: Made in Britain. A celebration of comedy writing duo David Croft and Jimmy Perry, examining how their work can be viewed as a unique chronicle of the UK in the 20th century. (R) 8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring lets Frazer take charge of the platoon, gambling that a taste of authority will give him a more responsible attitude. (R) 9.00 Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to Off the Wall. Spike Lee's documentary charting the path of the King of Pop's career through to the release of Off the Wall, the 1979 project that broke records, and propelled Michael to international stardom. Lee's investigation begins in the early days of Jackson's time in the limelight, from his work with his brothers and his solo outings, and details how the Jackson boys' success led them to leave Motown. Includes contributions by Berry Gordy, Questlove, and Philly International Records founders Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who produced the Jackson brothers' first two non-Motown albums, resulting in their first platinum single. 10.30 Pop Goes BBC Two. (R) 12.00 Live Athletics. 3.00 Messiah at the Foundling Hospital. (R) 4.00 A Cable Abroad: Cambodia. (R) 5.00 The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knockout Street. 6.15 Bottom Knockout Street. (R) 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 6.50 Sooty. (R) 7.05 Super 4. (R) 7.15 Looptail. (R) 7.30 Scrambled! Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled! Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Scrambled! Horrid Henry. (R) 8.10 Scrambled! Neds & Monsters. (R) 8.30 Scrambled! Jessie. 9.05 Scrambled! The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) 9.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 10.20 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 11.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 12.25 ITV News; Weather. 12.29 Regional Programme. 12.30 Big Box Little Box. (R) 1.00 Judge Rinder. (R) 2.00 The Chase. (R) 3.00 Tipping Point. (R) 4.00 Regional Programme; Weather. 4.15 ITV News; Weather. 4.30 Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v Scotland (Kick-off 5.00pm). 7.10 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. X-Men actor Hugh Jackman steps into the role of guest announcer this week, and is joined by his Eddie the Eagle co-star Taron Egerton. Ant and Dec's escapades continue in Who Shot Simon Cowell?, and as the pair face a life on the run. Dec discovers the real killer's identity. Back in the real world, Peter Crouch and Abbey Clancy get into the party mood in I'm a Celebrity. Get Out of Me Earl, and the End of the Show Show transforms into a West End showdown, as the cast of two high-profile musicals compete in a sing-off. Plus, as ever, one lucky member of the audience is given a chance to win the items advertised in one of last week's commercial breaks. 8.40 You're Back in the Room. Phillip Schofield and renowned illusionist Keith Barry challenge five more strangers to complete seemingly simple challenges, this time enlisting the aid of Chris Kamara. 9.40 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined in the studio by Hugh Jackman, Taron Egerton, Shazia Mirza and Luke Evans. Plus, Scottish alternative rockers Primal Scream perform. Last in the series. 10.45 ITV News; Weather. 11.00 Film: Yes Man. (2008) Comedy based on the book by Danny Wallace, starring Jim Carrey. 1.00 Jackpot247. 3.00 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 6.40 The King of Queens. (R) 7.05 The King of Queens. (R) 7.30 The Grid. 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 Stories: Share a Story. (R) 9.00 The Morning Line. 10.00 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 11.00 The Superhumans Show. 11.30 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. 12.30 Formula 1: Australian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. 2.15 Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Uttoxeter and Kempton Park. 4.30 Come Dine with Me. 5.00 Come Dine with Me. 5.30 Come Dine with Me. 6.00 Come Dine with Me. Jade, a former soldier now seeking her fortune as a balloon sculpting entrepreneur, hosts the fourth and final dinner party in Swansea. She plans to execute her evening's entertainments with military precision, but with mother-of-two Anna and patriotic Welshman Leon still at loggerheads, things might not go as smoothly as she had planned. As the evening draws to a close, the diners deliver the final round of results, revealing which host has secured the £1,000 prize. 6.30 Channel 4 News. 6.45 The World's Weirdest Weather. Strange sounds produced by unusual weather, including bell-like ringing resonating from rocks, sci-fi style thrumming noises coming from lakes, and the ear-splitting roar of deadly twisters. 7.40 Film: The Day After Tomorrow. (2004) A climatologist warns global warming will soon result in destructive freak weather, or even another ice age. He thinks the world still has time to prepare for the worst, but the crisis happens almost immediately – and as storms, earthquakes and hurricanes strike in terrifying fashion, he races across America to rescue his son from a frozen New York. Disaster thriller, with Jake Gyllenhaal and Dennis Quaid. 10.00 Film: Kick-Ass 2. (2013) Premiere. Amateur vigilante Dave joins a team of crimefighters, but faces the world's first supervillain. Action comedy sequel, with Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Chloe Grace Moretz. 12.05 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) 1.00 Hollyoaks. (R) 3.10 Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) 4.05 Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 8.55 The Fairly OddParents. 9.30 The Saturday Show Live. 11.40 Funniest Fails, Fails & Flops. (R) 12.10 The Gadget Show. (R) 1.10 Police Interceptors. (R) 2.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 3.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 4.05 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 5.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) 6.00 5 News Weekend. 6.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. Callen and Sam hunt for two gunmen who shot Deeks during a robbery at a convenience store, and discover the gunmen were gang members for hire. 7.00 NCIS: New Orleans. Lachlan Colston, a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy, is murdered on US soil, prompting Special Investigator Naomi Parsons to travel to New Orleans from Australia to investigate. Evidence mounts suggesting that Colston's death was a hired hit, but when the team moves in to apprehend the assassin, Parsons' rash actions jeopardise the arrest. Suitably humbled, the Aussie agent agrees to tow the line as Pride and his colleagues learn that Colston may have been killed to derail a nuclear programme to be established on the Cocos Islands. 8.00 NCIS. While on a joint Coast Guard and NCIS training exercise at sea, Gibbs and Agent Borin spot a dead man overboard, who is found to be a missing member of the crew of a nearby vessel. 8.55 5 News Weekend. 9.00 The Championship: Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's matches from the Championship, which included Derby County v Nottingham Forest. 10.00 Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present a round-up of the latest matches in League One and League Two, which included Wigan Athletic v Bradford City, and Stevenage v Northampton Town. 10.30 The NCIS Movie: Judgement Day. The funeral of a special agent in Los Angeles leads Shepard on a covert mission to finish some classified business she began a decade previously in Europe. (R) 12.10 Sportscasino. 3.10 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Human Planet 8.00 Survivors: Nature's Indestructible Creatures 9.00 Follow the Money 11.00 Arena: Ken Dodd – Happiness 12.00 Bee Gees at the BBC and Beyond 1.00 The Joy of the Bee Gees 2.00 Sound of Cinema: The Music That Made the Movies 3.00 Top of the Pops: 1981 3.35 Close
ITV2
11.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 12.00 The Almost Impossible Gameshow 1.25 Scorpion 2.25 You've Been Framed! 3.00 Animals 3.30 Film: Legally Blonde (2001) 5.25 Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) 7.40 Film: The Mummy (1999) 10.00 Celebrity Juice Live 11.00 Family Guy 12.35 American Dad! 1.30 @elevenish 2.00 Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands 2.50 Teleshopping 5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.35 Sherlock Holmes: The Eligible Bachelor 1.55 A Touch of Frost 3.55 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide 6.00 Midsomer Murders 10.00 A Touch of Frost 12.10 Blue Murder 1.40 Doctor in the House 2.05 ITV3 Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
11.40 The Car Chasers 12.40 Pawn Stars 1.35 Storage Wars 2.30 Storage Wars: Texas 3.30 Film: Gunsmoke (1953) 5.10 Film: Appaloosa (2008) 7.15 Film: Police Academy 6: City Under Siege (1989) 9.00 An Audience with Billy Connolly 10.05 Film: Magnum Force (1973) 12.35 Film: Born to Raise Hell (2010) 2.30 Hogan's Heroes 3.00 Teleshopping
E4
11.00 Baby Daddy 12.00 New Girl 1.00 How I Met Your Mother 2.00 Film: Big (1998) 4.05 The Goldbergs 5.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine 6.30 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Film: Max Payne (2008) 11.00 Gogglebox 1.10 Tattoo Fixers 2.15 How I Met Your Mother 3.05 Gogglebox 4.05 20 Revenge
Film4
11.00 Unidentified Flying Oddball (1979) 1.00 Dragonball Evolution (2009) 2.40 Step Up 4: Miami Heat (2012) 4.40 The Phantom (1996) 6.40 Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992) 9.00 Paul (2011) Sci-fi comedy, with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost. 11.05 Rush (2013) Fact-based motor racing drama, with Chris Hemsworth and Daniel Bruhl. 1.25 The Haunting in Connecticut (2009) 3.30 Clouse

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CHOICE	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5	DIGITAL
<div><p>Heston Blumenthal</p><p>Heston's Dinner in Space (Channel 4, 6pm)</p><p>Heston Blumenthal and his team, working closely with the UK Space Agency, ESA and NASA, attempt to revolutionise the previously limited world of space food. British astronaut Tim Peake set Heston a task before embarking on his mission at the International Space Station, which was to create seven dishes that would remind him of home, helping to combat the emotional impact of his journey. Heston takes Tim on a nostalgic trip back to his childhood with every bite, providing much-needed comfort food and creating the quintessential cup of tea – the first to be sipped in Space.</p></div>	<p>6.00 Breakfast. 7.40 Match of the Day. (R) 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 10.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Regional Programme. 12.15 Bargain Hunt. (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 The Sport Relief Games Show 2016. 3.15 A Question of Sport. (R) 3.45 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.30 Lifeline. 4.40 Songs of Praise. 5.15 Sport Relief 2016: The Best Bits.</p> <p>6.15 BBC News.</p> <p>6.35 Regional Programme.</p> <p>6.45 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison explore Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, which was the inspiration for the Hundred Acre Wood in AA Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh series of stories. John Craven visits West Rise Junior School in Eastbourne, which boasts a Bronze-Age settlement and water buffalo roaming its marshlands, and Tom Heap hears about the impact that wind farms could have on birdlife in Scotland. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.</p> <p>7.45 The Voice UK. The battle stages are now over, and Paloma Faith, Boy George, Will.i.am and Ricky Wilson each now have a complete team of would-be stars under their tutelage. The next challenge the contestants face is the knock-outs, in which they must carefully select and perform a "killer song" that will elevate them above their team rivals, as the coaches whittle their eight chosen singers down to three. Presented by Emma Willis and Marvin Humes.</p> <p>9.00 The Night Manager. Roper discovers that crucial documents have been leaked and becomes suspicious that he has a traitor in his team. Pine is asked to demonstrate weapons to one of the arms dealer's clients, and is confronted with the full horror of Roper's actions. Dromgoole tries to persuade Burr to abandon her investigation, leaving her afraid for her family's safety.</p> <p>10.00 BBC News.</p> <p>10.20 Regional Programme.</p> <p>10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Manchester City v Manchester United at the Etihad Stadium.</p> <p>11.55 Live Athletics.</p> <p>1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.30 BBC News.</p>	<p>6.00 This Is BBC Two. 6.15 An Island Parish. (R) 6.45 An Island Parish. (R) 7.15 This Farming Life. (R) 8.15 Gardeners' World. (R) 8.45 Countryfile. (R) 9.45 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.15 The Best Dishes Ever. (R) 11.45 The Best Dishes Ever. (R) 12.15 MOTD2 Extra. 1.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 2.00 Heir Hunters. (R) 3.00 Athletics. 5.00 Flo! It! (R) 5.30 The Secret History of My Family. (R)</p> <p>6.30 Perry and Croft: Made in Britain. The celebration of comedy writing duo David Croft and Jimmy Perry continues with an examination of how their sitcoms chronicled the UK's class system in the 20th century. (R)</p> <p>7.00 Gareth Malone's Great Choir Reunion. To mark the 10th anniversary of The Choir, Gareth Malone tracks down members from all the choirs who have participated in the series to bring them together for a reunion. (R)</p> <p>8.00 World's Weirdest Events. Chris Packham discovers the cause of mysterious holes in the Russian tundra, finds an underwater lake and meets the creator of a cannon especially for salmon. Last in the series.</p> <p>9.00 Tribes, Predators & Me. New series. Gordon Buchanan learns how tribal cultures hunt and live alongside dangerous animals, beginning by joining the Waorani tribe in Ecuador as they search for anacondas.</p> <p>10.00 Thirteen. Ivy tries to reconnect with her sister, but a mysterious letter threatens their reconciliation. Merchant returns to Mark White's house, and makes a shocking discovery.</p> <p>11.00 The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Story. The prosecution team is no match for Johnnie Cochran's tactics and mind games, or his stage-managed showcase of OJ's life, while Chris Darden faces antagonism from friend and foe. (R)</p> <p>11.50 Line of Duty. Arnott uncovers new details about Denton's personal life which appear to support her claim that she is being framed, while Hastings risks his career to pursue a high-level target. (R)</p> <p>12.50 Line of Duty. (R) 1.50 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) 2.45 Holby City. (R) 3.45 A Cable Abroad: Canada. (R) 4.45 The Fifteen Billion Pound Railway. (R)</p>	<p>6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockers Street. 6.15 Bottom Knockers Street. (R) 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 6.50 Sooty. (R) 7.05 Super 4. (R) 7.15 Looped. (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) 8.10 Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) 8.30 Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. 9.05 Scrambled!: The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) 9.25 ITV News. 9.30 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 10.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 11.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 12.25 ITV News: Weather. 12.35 The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) 1.40 River Monsters. (R) 2.40 Big Star's Little Star. (R) 3.40 Off Their Rockers. (R) 4.10 Film: Octopussy. (1983) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore.</p> <p>6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.</p> <p>6.45 ITV News; Weather.</p> <p>7.00 Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands. The future of the Shieldlands rests in Rheda's hands, but whether she summons the courage to fight against her brother and his fearsome army remains to be seen. Last in the series.</p> <p>8.00 The Story of Cats. Species that have adapted to behave very differently to typical felines, from jaguars that swim underwater to tigers able to survive freezing temperatures. Last in the series.</p> <p>9.00 Doctor Thorne. Frank and Mary plan their wedding, but Lady Arabella is still determined to stop them going ahead with the marriage, and tries to persuade Mary that she should it would be in Frank's best interests to marry someone else. Sir Roger's son Louis struggles to cope with his new position in society, and proves just as self-destructive as his father, drinking to excess and hurling abuse at his dinner guests. Final episode of the drama, adapted by Julian Fellowes and starring Tom Hollander, Stefanie Martini and Rebecca Front. Last in the series.</p> <p>10.05 ITV News; Weather.</p> <p>10.20 Six Nations Highlights. Action from the fifth and final round of the championship.</p> <p>11.20 Premiership Rugby Union.</p> <p>12.15 Jackpot247. 3.00 ITV Nightscreen.</p>	<p>6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 6.35 How I Met Your Mother. (R) 7.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.25 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 7.50 Frasier. (R) 8.15 Frasier. (R) 8.40 Frasier. (R) 9.10 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 9.35 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.00 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.30 Sunday Brunch. 1.30 Formula 1: Australian Grand Prix Highlights. 4.00 Film: Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters. (2013) Premiere. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Logan Lerman.</p> <p>6.00 Heston's Dinner in Space. Heston Blumenthal and his team, working closely with the UK Space Agency, ESA and NASA, attempt to revolutionise the previously limited world of space food. British astronaut Tim Peake set Heston a task before embarking on his mission at the International Space Station, which was to create seven dishes that would remind him of home, helping to combat the emotional impact of his journey. Heston takes Tim on a nostalgic trip back to his childhood with every bite, providing much-needed comfort food and creating the quintessential cup of tea – the first to be sipped in Space.</p> <p>7.30 Channel 4 News.</p> <p>8.00 Great Canal Journeys. New series. Timothy West and Prunella Scales embark on more watery adventures. This time, they head into uncharted waters to attempt one of the longest canal journeys in the world – 350 miles coast to coast across Sweden. The first leg of their voyage begins in Gothenburg, where they link up with the historic Gota Canal, taking them into the heart of the Scandinavian country and toward the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>9.00 Indian Summers. Aafin's wounded comrade Nareesh is convinced someone has betrayed him, but as Aafin struggles to contain him, he discovers the truth is darker and more dangerous than he knew.</p> <p>10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)</p> <p>11.00 Film: The Taking of Pelham 123. (2009) Thriller remake, with Denzel Washington.</p> <p>1.00 Embarrassing Bodies Down Under. (R) 1.50 Come Dine with Me. (R) 4.10 Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. (R)</p>	<p>6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. 6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) 6.15 Angelina Ballerina. (R) 6.30 Bob the Builder. (R) 6.45 Ticky Toc. (R) 6.55 Zack and Quack. (R) 7.05 Roorbarb and Custard Too. (R) 7.15 Make Way for Noddy. (R) 7.35 Paw Patrol. (R) 7.40 Little Princess. (R) 7.50 Pip Ahoy! (R) 8.10 Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) 8.35 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) 8.50 Wanda and the Alien. (R) 9.05 Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) 9.20 Jelly Jam. (R) 9.30 LazyTown. (R) 9.55 The Fairly OddParents. 10.30 The Championship: Football League Tonight. (R) 11.30 Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. (R) 12.00 Chinese Food in Minutes. (R) 12.15 Film: Madeline. (1998) 2.00 Film: Justin and the Knights of Valour. (2013) Premiere. Animated adventure with the voice of Freddie Highmore. 4.00 Film: A Cinderella Story. (2004) Romantic comedy, starring Hilary Duff and Chad Michael Murray.</p> <p>6.00 Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. Dave Spikely and Zoe Lyons introduce videos from the internet featuring animals doing bizarre and humorous things, with one of the first edition focusing on cats. (R)</p> <p>7.00 Now That's Funny! Featuring clips of animals behaving like humans, a baby who has an odd reaction to bacon, and some fancy dance moves.</p> <p>7.55 5 News Weekend.</p> <p>8.00 Penn & Teller: Fool Us in Vegas. Featuring an illusionist battling his own reflection, some shocking predictions, a card trick involving a mini plunger and a mindbending stunt with a Rubik's Cube.</p> <p>8.55 5 News Weekend.</p> <p>9.00 Film: Tower Block. (2012) Premiere. The residents of a soon-to-be-demolished tower block are trapped while a mysterious sniper picks them off one by one. Thriller, starring Sheridan Smith and Jack O'Connell. Includes 5 News at 10pm.</p> <p>10.45 Film: Harry Brown. (2009) An elderly retired marine takes the law into his own hands when his friend is murdered by hoodlums on a London estate. Crime thriller, starring Michael Caine and Emily Mortimer.</p> <p>12.35 Tattoo Disasters UK. (R) 1.00 SuperCasino. 3.10 Police Interceptors. (R) 4.00 Wildlife SOS. (R) 4.50 Great Artists. (R) 5.15 Divine Designs. (R) 5.45 Angels of Jarm. (R)</p>	<p>BBC Four</p> <p>7.00 John Williams at the BBC 8.00 Pappano's Classical Voices 9.00 Darcey Bussell Dances Hollywood 10.30 Film: I'm So Excited! (2013) 11.55 Lee Goodman's Dance Band Days 12.55 Bee Gees at the BBC and Beyond 1.55 The Joy of the Bee Gees 2.55 The Story of British Pathe 3.55 Close</p> <p>ITV2</p> <p>12.20 Take Me Out 1.30 Film: The Incredible Hulk (2008) 5.45 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 7.15 Film: Liar Liar (1997) 8.00 Ibiza Weekender 10.00 Family Guy 10.30 Bordertown 11.00 Family Guy 11.55 American Dad! 12.55 The Cleveland Show 1.45 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 2.10 Teleshopping 5.40 ITV2 Nightscreen</p> <p>ITV3</p> <p>12.35 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide 2.40 Inspector Morse 4.55 Midsomer Murders 9.00 Carry On Forever 10.00 Wycliffe 11.55 Film: Private Benjamin (1980) 1.25 A Touch of Frost 3.05 May the Best House Win 4.50 On the Buses 5.15 Judge Judy 6.35 ITV3 Nightscreen</p> <p>ITV4</p> <p>11.00 Pawn Stars 12.55 Film: Appaloosa (2008) 3.00 Live Table Tennis. Coverage of the concluding day of the National Championships. 6.00 Storage Wars 7.00 The Classic Car Show 8.00 Premiership Rugby Union 9.00 Film: US Marshals (1998) 11.40 Film: Child's Play 3 (1991) 1.30 As Men 2 1.55 Hogan's Heroes 2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping</p> <p>E4</p> <p>12.00 Couples Come Dine with Me 2.00 Film: Hairspray (2007) 4.20 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts 4.30 The Goldbergs 6.00 The Big Bang Theory 9.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 10.00 Tattoo Fixers 12.00 Virtually Famous 12.50 The Aliens 1.55 The 100 2.40 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 3.30 Hollyoaks</p> <p>Film4</p> <p>11.00 Five Children and It (2004) 1.00 The Golden Compass (2007) 3.10 Catch That Kid (2004) 4.55 10 Things I Hate About You (1999) 6.50 G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra (2009) 9.00 Non-Stop (2014) An air marshal on a transatlantic flight searches for a terrorist threatening to kill the passengers one by one. Action thriller, with Liam Neeson and Julianne Moore. 11.05 Hanna (2011) Action thriller, starring Saoirse Ronan. 1.15 Nine to Five (1980) 3.30 Close</p>

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Boy Next Door, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A romantic novelist is attracted to her next door neighbour. When he is murdered, she finds her infatuation makes her the prime suspect. Crime thriller, with Dina Meyer and Woody Jeffreys. (2008)

TUESDAY

The Wrong Woman, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A suburban policeman's wife is falsely accused of murdering a prostitute in a car park and finds herself in a legal nightmare when evidence pointing to her guilt mounts up. Drama, starring Danica McKeller and Jonathan Bennett. (2013)

WEDNESDAY

Wedding Daze, BBC1, 11.45pm
A man is planning to marry his girlfriend, but she drops dead while he is in the middle of proposing. One year later, he is still searching for a way to overcome his depression, and hits on the idea of spontaneously asking a waitress to be his wife. Amazingly, she agrees, but the news dismays his friends and family. Romantic comedy, starring Jason Biggs, Isla Fisher and Joe Pantoliano. (2006)



Night Train to Lisbon, Friday, BBC2, 10.30pm

THURSDAY

Garage Sale Mystery II: All That Glitters, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Jennifer Shannon has a keen eye for a bargain, picking them up at garage sales and selling them for a tidy profit in her own shop. But she also has a nose for a mystery, which comes in handy when the owner of a storage unit is murdered. Crime drama based on Suzi Weinert's novel, starring Lori Loughlin. (2014)

FRIDAY

Night Train to Lisbon, BBC2, 10.30pm
An academic impulsively pursues a woman he met by chance, leading to him abandoning his job to follow her to Lisbon. On the journey, he reads a book belonging to her, and is inspired by the philosopher who wrote it. He sets out to track down everyone who knew the author to discover the story of his life. Drama based on Pascal Mercier's novel, starring Jeremy Irons and Melanie Laurent. (2013)

Family must learn new ways to communicate

Take a Bafta-winning writer, an A-list cast and a hit Israeli drama, shake them all up and what do you get?

The BBC's new six-part series **The A Word (BBC1, 9pm)**, it seems. It's been inspired by Yellow Peppers, a show that went down a storm in its native country and was described by the critic of the Israel Today newspaper as being "nothing like anything you've ever seen on television" when it first aired in 2011.

It has now been adapted for a British audience by Peter Bowker, the acclaimed scribe behind such shows as *Marvellous*, *Eric and Ernie*, *Occupation* and *Blackpool*.

He also penned the recent take on John Lanchester's novel *Capital*, which didn't receive the same kind of critical success – but he promises to be back on form with this offering.

The story focuses on the Hughes family, a seemingly ordinary clan living within a tight-knit Lake District community.

At the heart of the story is Joe, a five-year-old boy who loves listening to

his father's punk records over and over again, but his inability to connect to the world around worries his parents.

Eventually, Joe is diagnosed with autism, and his loved ones realise that if they want him to develop his ability to communicate and interact with the outside world, they must alter their own approach to life.

Bowker is certainly the ideal person to tell the story, having spent 14 years teaching children with learning difficulties and autism before becoming a professional writer.

"We have the opportunity here to make something funny, tough, realistic and inventive about contemporary family life and autism," he claims. "In a society where imperfection increasingly comes with blame attached, it seems timely to look at how autism is regarded both within a family and the wider community – and to give some insight into how that experience might be for the child on the autism spectrum."

"It's a drama full of ideas – about parenthood, about disability, about

communication, about community – and will emphatically engage an audience whatever their experience of the subject."

Many people will think they are familiar with autism if they have seen the film *Rain Man*, but there are lots of forms of the condition.

Here, Joe doesn't have any special skills; in fact, for much of the time he appears to be completely normal, there are a just a few key behaviours that mark him out.

"The *A Word* tackles parts of life that aren't always easy and Peter has drawn on the absolute highs, lows and challenges so many families face when a child is different to other children, in a beautiful way," says Polly Hill, the BBC's controller of drama. "With Peter's award-winning track record and history of drama tackling tough subjects, *The A Word* is set to be a rollercoaster of a series which is ultimately an uplifting, honest and human drama for BBC One."

Christopher Eccleston, Lee Ingleby, Morven Christie and six-year-old newcomer Max Vento head the cast.



Christopher Eccleston stars in *The A Word*, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Davina McCall: Life at the Extreme ITV, 9pm
Davina travels to the Costa Rican jungle, which is one of the wettest and most humid places on earth, but is a habitat in which animals thrive and is home to around 500,000 species. She learns about the ways in which creatures including sloths, poison dart frogs, tarantulas, tapirs, fer-de-lance vipers, common basilisks and spider monkeys have adapted to the conditions, before spending a night high up in the treetops of the rainforest – where a lightning striking directly overhead forces an abrupt change of plans. Last in the series.

The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Story BBC2, 9pm
Public opinion turns against prosecutor Marcia Clark as she is pilloried for her appearance, while more missteps by the investigating detectives during their searches for evidence are revealed – though defence lawyer Johnnie Cochrane has a damaging secret of his own. Meanwhile, the Increasing TV coverage of the trial is bringing pressure to bear on all those concerned. Fact-based crime drama about the trial of OJ Simpson. Cuba Gooding Jr and Sarah Paulson star.

TUESDAY

One Born Every Minute Channel 4, 9pm
It's been a surprise hit for Channel 4, and one that doesn't appear to be running out of steam just yet. But why has *One Born Every Minute* been such a success? While other docusoaps fall by the wayside, this one continues to win new fans – perhaps because the stories it follows are so incredibly moving. Expect more of the same this time around as the 'action' moves to Liverpool Women's Hospital – and seeing as it has the largest and busiest maternity unit in Europe, there should be plenty of enthralling tales to tell.

WEDNESDAY Employable Me BBC2, 9pm
When Channel 4 hired the first continuity announcer with Tourette's syndrome a few months ago, it proved that nothing should stand in the way of employable folks with afflictions. In this new series, cameras follow some of the UK's job seekers who prove that having Tourette's or autism should not make them unemployable. Episode one focuses on 52-year-old

Paul who has a severe case of Tourette's, but is determined to succeed at work again, and with the assistance of scientists, uncovers amazing skills. We also meet Brett, a 34-year-old with autism, whose true hidden genius is revealed by a world-renowned expert. A moving, occasionally funny and often uplifting addition to the schedules.

THURSDAY Line of Duty BBC2, 9pm

Jed Mercurio's highly acclaimed, multi-award-winning crime thriller is back for a new run. Once again, it will follow the work of the AC-12 team as they investigated another possible case of wrongdoing by their fellow police officers. And while the core cast remains the same, guests actors are brought in to play the newcomers. This time it's Daniel Mays who will be taking a starring role, stepping into the shoes previously worn by Lennie James and Keeley Hawes. He plays Sgt

Davina McCall: Life at the Extreme, Monday, ITV, 9pm

Danny Waldron, leader of an armed response unit who is being investigated after a suspect was shot dead during an incident.

FRIDAY Britain's Whales ITV, 8pm

Part one of two. More than 25 kinds of whales and dolphins and over 30 different sharks either visit or live in British waters. Off the coast of Ireland, Ben Fogle comes face to face with a pod of humpbacks and witnesses dolphins working with the whales to hunt down their prey. Sharks are much harder to find, so using the biggest shark bait available he and co-presenter Ellie Harrison prepare to head out to sea.

Boomers BBC1, 9pm
There's something inherently funny about campsites, as the *Carry On* crew proved in the late 1960s. In 2016, it seems there's little danger of the genre being forgotten either, thanks to the first episode of this returning series. Philip Jackson (so good in Caitlin Moran sitcom *Raised in Wolves*), Alison Steadman, Russ Abbot, Stephanie Beacham, Paula Wilcox and James Smith make up the trio of newly retired couples who take a break from the Norfolk resort of Thurnemouth and go camping.

Final whistle

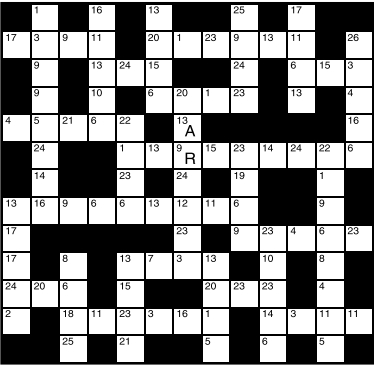
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
Q M V N A T R D G H Z L F
O B P W S X E K Y C I J U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

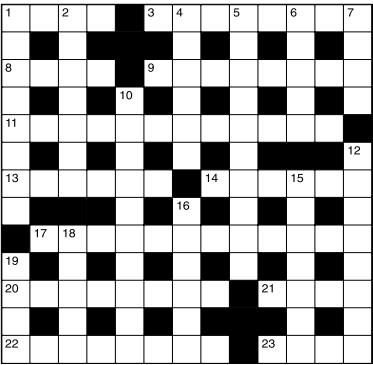
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 1. See 6 Down
- 3. Still on a different mount (8)
- 8. Put some indication on foreign coin (4)
- 9. He must have been willing (8)
- 11. What retiring ladies assume (5-7)
- 13. Ceremonial trial arranged about the middle of January (6)
- 14. A section of the foot soldiers should be! (6)
- 17. Protracted, like a tooth removed years ago (4,5,3)
- 20. Arranging notes about the position of those making a film (2,3,3)
- 21. See 23 Across
- 22. One that's not self-supporting in dilapidated pit areas (8)
- 23 & 21Ac. Pastureland, having potential, can be hired out (8)

Down

- 1. Any miser would upset Roman Catholic retreat (8)
- 2. It's properly erected, honest! (7)
- 4. Those people embracing alternative abstract idea (6)
- 5. Stop press: The French Trial Report (6,4)
- 6 & 1Ac. Awkwardly placed, as many a noodle may be (2,3,4)
- 7. The usual thing found in Rangoon or Mandalay (4)
- 10. They murder fifty aliens outside (10)
- 12. Pure description of one recovered from measles? (8)
- 15. Put oneself out to cause affliction (7)
- 16. Stripe for the serviceman (6)
- 18. The boulder decapitated a river creature (5)
- 19. Confine the cask manufacturer without any hesitation (4)



Quick Clues:

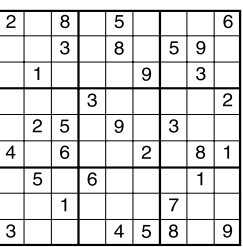
Across

- 1. Frenzy (4)
- 3. Terrifying (8)
- 8. So (4)
- 9. Divert (8)
- 11. Immense (12)
- 13. Seduce (6)
- 14. Connect (6)
- 17. Co-operate (4,4,4)
- 20. Muddle (8)
- 21. Solid (4)
- 22. Petition (8)
- 23. Sell (4)

Down

- 1. Kept (8)
- 2. Epicure (7)
- 4. Hatful (6)
- 5. Withdrawal (10)
- 6. Fragile (5)
- 7. Quote (4)
- 10. Reckonable (10)
- 12. Protected (8)
- 15. Disturb (7)
- 16. Overrun (6)
- 18. Separate (5)
- 19. Island (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	8	2	1	6	7	9	3	5
5	3	7	4	2	5	8	1	6
6	5	1	3	9	8	7	4	2
2	1	5	7	4	3	6	9	8
8	7	4	6	1	9	2	5	3
3	6	9	8	6	2	1	7	4
7	2	6	9	3	4	5	8	1
1	9	3	8	5	6	4	2	7
5	4	8	2	7	1	3	6	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Close the gap; 9 Uniform; 10 Delta; 11 Elder; 12 Terrace; 13 Scales; 15 Chilli; 18 Ruinous; 20 Appal; 22 Exact; 23 Rictous; 24 Nobody's fool. Down: 2 Laird; 3 Scourge; 4 Tomato; 5 Elder; 6 All hail; 7 Queer Street; 8 Materialist; 14 Agitato; 16 Head off; 17 Osprey; 19 Outdo; 21 Photo. QUICK - Across: 1 Tempestuous; 9 Painter; 10 Prior; 11 Obese; 12 Termite; 13 Treaty; 15 Effete; 18 Neglect; 20 Dodge; 22 Trait; 23 Islamic; 24 Belligerent. Down: 2 Elite; 3 Patient; 4 Sprite; 5 Upper; 6 Utilise; 7 Opportunity; 8 Irreverence; 14 Engrave; 16 Fiddler; 17 String; 19 Extol; 21 Demon.

Thinking space

Quiz

- 1. Which company designed the Merlin engine of the Spitfire and Hurricane?
- 2. What is the name of the lowest region on the Earth's surface?
- 3. Which nut is obtained from the areca palm?
- 4. In the Old Testament, who was Jacob's older twin brother?
- 5. Of which sea creature is the argonaut a type?
- 6. Which number Ivan was 'the Terrible'?
- 7. Which sea touches the shores of Denmark, Norway and Holland?
- 8. In Greek mythology, what hung on an oak tree at Colchis?
- 9. Which actor wrote Snakes and Ladders in 1978?
- 10. Of which creature is Psittacus erithacus a variety?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 April 23; 2 Inner Hebrides; 3 David Hockney; 4 Chickenpox; 5 St Francis of Assisi; 6 Skin; 7 Violin; 8 Christopher Timothy; 9 Nevada; 10 A degree.
- Niner: CAMBRIDGE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 2346735 gives a ballet company,
- 71448 gives an orchestra,
- 1591 gives an opera.



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The new-look Blue Ginger in Huntington, Cannock, has added spice since reopening. **MARK SHIPP** gives it a try

ON walking into the Blue Ginger, Natalie Imbruglia was playing. Not in person, obviously. I wouldn't want to give you the wrong impression.

And I wouldn't mislead you as to the quality of this restaurant, either. In fact, since dining at the new-look premises, I've often thought: Wishing I Was There.

Needless to say I was torn over what to eat. There was one big mistake, though. Well, a minor quibble, but we'll come to that later.

The restaurant, in Stafford Road, Huntington, reopened before the end of last year following a revamp that saw most of it swallowed up by a new convenience store.

Owner Abdul Ali, who has run the restaurant for four-and-a-half years, welcomes the smaller premises and its new look.

Homely

By his own admission, it was too big before, so by reducing its capacity makes it easier for him and his 10-strong staff to manage as well as allowing for a cosier and more homely dining experience.

I can only agree, and the pleasant decor and ambient lighting adds to welcoming environment. On entering, there is a plush reception area/bar with the whole restaurant, catering for more than 80 diners, sprawled out in front. It's well laid out too, so the owners can feel a sense of pride and achievement at a job well done.

The quality of fare has not been diminished, either.

Customers are liking what they see, with many old regulars coming back – and introducing newcomers to its delights. One look at



Outside Blue Ginger, Stafford Road, Huntington



The restaurant's interiors is well laid out

online reviews show that Blue Ginger is making a favourable impression.

The experienced chefs have come up with a novel menu at Blue Ginger, with speciality dishes, fish and seafood offerings. Some items blend other cuisines, while vegetarians are also catered for.

One highly recommended dish is the tellapia delight, filet of fish, medium spiced and pan fried with garlic, ginger, lemon juice and a hint of fresh mint.

Signature dishes include khodu ghost and desi lasagne, while the fusion appetisers include quorn chatt, with house specialities ca-

tering for non-meat eaters, like a mixed meat relish and paneer tikka masala.

It began well with a mussels starter for myself, particularly as the sweet and sour sauce that accompanied it among the best I've tasted. My other half chose the vegetable samosas – but was not expecting as much as she was given.

The mains I had trouble choosing from, but in the end I opted for exotic salmon. This didn't come dressed in some tropical outfit, but it did specify it came with spring rolls. I didn't get them.

But I didn't make a fuss as overall I wasn't

disappointed by the meal itself. I had with it a bullet naan, which I had pontificated over beforehand. It sounded hot, should I go for it?

I was informed it didn't quite have the bang I was probably expecting, and Abdul was right. It was the perfect sidekick, and the whole dish met my satisfaction, as my empty plate demonstrated. Desserts would have been one step too far, though.

The tried and trusted makhani chicken was enjoyed by the other half, too and it compared favourably with dishes tried elsewhere.

Blue Ginger is open seven days a week from 5.30pm. Call 01543 500300 or 502376.



The reception area at Blue Ginger

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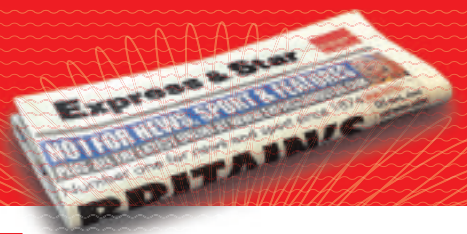
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Old Quarter house has been refurbished

SITUATED in the popular Old Quarter of Stourbridge, a short walk from the town centre, charming and historical 67 Envile Street is a deceptively spacious home that has been refurbished.

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£124,950

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- FITTED KITCHEN DINER AREA
- EPC RATING: C

Offers in the Region Of £134,950

Shelsley Avenue, Oldbury



- THREE BEDROOM MID TERRACE
- SPACIOUS THROUGH LOUNGE
- MODERN NEWLY FITTED KITCHEN
- EPC RATING: D

Offers in Excess of £124,950

The Furlong, Wednesbury



- THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED HOME
- OFF ROAD PARKING
- GOOD SIZED BEDROOMS
- EPC RATING: B

Offers in Excess of £119,950

Barnwood Road, Wolverhampton



- THREE BEDROOM END TERRACE
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- KITCHEN / DINER
- EPC RATING: D

Offers in Excess of £99,950

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Little Lane, West Bromwich



- THREE BEDROOM TERRACED HOME
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS
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- EPC RATING: D

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- EPC RATING: B

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- THREE BEDROOM LINKED DETACHED HOUSE
- NICE QUIET LOCATION
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- FRONT AND REAR GARDENS

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Ibiza can prove to be a bit of a bargain

By Ian Donaldson

CLOSE your eyes and you could be driving a Volkswagen or an Audi ... or a Skoda, come to that.

There's the same slick precision about the way everything works; the result of sinking billions of euros in development costs in budgets decided long before the VW Group's recent woes raised their expensive heads.

Now open your eyes (best do it soon if the car is moving) and you'll discover the badge reads SEAT, from the Spanish outpost of the world's biggest – or second biggest – car maker.

That means it's supposed to slip into a VW Group portfolio where Audi equals posh, Volkswagen is solidly middle class, Skoda is all about value (not cheap prices any more) and SEAT has a touch of Latin zing.

Take the car tested here. It's the latest and mildly modified version of the popular Ibiza, uniquely offered in cars of this size as a three-door hatch (the SC), a more practical five-door or the ST, for Sports Tourer, or what you and I call an estate.

Prices start at precisely £10,000 and adding a couple of doors costs £450 but the boot space stays the same. Opt for the estate and it's a slightly longer car with a much bigger load area and a price hike of £1,150 over the three-door Ibiza.

The refreshed range looks much the same as before, with only LED driving lights on dearer models and a new choice of colours and alloy wheels to give the game away. Inside, there's a new steering wheel and new look dials and trim.

Looker

So, not much to talk about there, but the Ibiza always was a bit of a looker in a class where stodgy rules more strongly than smart.

Rather more happens in the bits that matter most, from new steering to refreshed range of eight engines, starting with a 75 horsepower three-cylinder petrol unit and topping out with 192 when the new 146mph Cupra version arrives.

No price for that yet, but the 1.2 litre CONNECT model on test costs £14,170 as a three-door SC. Diesels (with only a single 1.4 litre on offer in a class that is wildly tilted towards petrol) cost from £16,885 and come with a company tax efficient 95g/km rating and theoretical 78.5mpg average consumption.

SEAT is pushing the connectivity of this latest Ibiza, meaning that if you choose the right model, or add an upgrade, you can turn your car into a version of your smartphone. Indeed, go for a CONNECT trim level and there's a Samsung Galaxy A3 mobile phone as part of the package.

The car will talk to Android or Apple operating systems, letting you talk to the world with safety and ease, or listen to your favourite music. It will, with a new SEAT CONNECT App, let you monitor your heartbeat, but best not check moments after that idiot pulled out in front of you without looking.

The CONNECT version of this Ibiza revamp looks like the sweet spot of the range and comes pretty well loaded with kit. As well as the cleverness outlined above there is satellite navigation, DAB radio and a six speaker sound system with Bluetooth.

A pair of 1.0 litre petrol engines are available, one with a turbo and more power. Next up is the four-cylinder 1.2 litre of the car you see here, with more than useful performance on a mix of country roads, where the 43mpg shown at journey's end seemed about par for the course.

And with every inch covered this latest, mildly tweaked Ibiza displayed the crispness in response from steering, clutch, gearchange and brakes that mark it out as a member of the VW Group family.

Which makes it a bit of a bargain if you choose carefully.

TESTED

SEAT Ibiza SC CONNECT 1.2 TSI 90PS

Price: £14,170

Drivetrain: 1.2 litre 89bhp petrol engine, 5-speed gearbox

Performance: Top speed 114mph, 0-62mph 10.7 seconds

Economy: Euro average 56.7mpg CO2 116g/km road tax £0 first year, then £30

Safety: EuroNCAP 5 stars

Insurance: 13

Warranty: Three years or 60,000 miles



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- 15" alloys
- auto head light and wipers
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CIVIC 1.8 SE PLUS 5DR

OUR PRICE £15,999

SAVE £4,486

Cost New £20,485



- 17" alloys
- front fog lights
- rear parking camera
- rain sensing wipers
- 6 speakers
- climate control dual auto a/c

- front & rear parking sensors
- cruise control with speed limiter
- 2 x USB/HDMI connection
- Honda CONNECT 7" touchscreen display with AM/FM/DAB tuner, Aha! app integration & internet browsing, internet radio

CIVIC 1.8 SPORT 5DR

OUR PRICE £15,999

SAVE £4,536

Cost New £20,535



- 17" sport alloys
- black roof lining
- privacy glass
- sports grille
- body coloured spoiler
- climate control

- cruise control
- front & rear parking sensors
- Honda CONNECT 7" touchscreen display with AM/FM/DAB tuner, internet radio, Aha! app integration, internet browsing, Garmin navigation
- rear parking camera

CIVIC 1.6 DIESEL SPORT 5DR (OPTIONAL NAVI)

OUR PRICE £16,999

SAVE £5,351

Garmin® Sat Nav Optional £500
Cost New £22,350



- 17" alloys
- climate control (a/c)
- cruise control
- reversing camera
- front fog lights

- privacy glass
- DAB radio
- 2 x USB connectors
- Honda Connect System
- front & rear parking sensors

CIVIC 1.6 SR DIESEL 5DR

OUR PRICE £18,999

SAVE £5,316

Cost New £24,315



- 16" alloys
- cruise control
- climate control (a/c)
- DAB radio
- auto lights & wipers
- leather upholstery

- glass roof
- privacy glass
- front fog lights
- heated front seats
- Honda Connect System with Garmin® sat nav
- front & rear parking sensors with reversing camera

CIVIC TOURER 1.6 SR DIESEL

OUR PRICE £18,999

SAVE £7,616

Cost New £26,615



- 18" alloys
- cruise control
- climate control (a/c)
- DAB radio
- auto lights & wipers
- front fog lights

- cargo pack
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Get your top off in MINI

By James Parker

The reinvention of the MINI brand continues with the launch of the all-new MINI Convertible.

With major refinements against its predecessor, the car features a new design and significant enhancements to make open-topped MINI motoring even more dynamic, stylish and practical.

It follows hugely successful model launches in 2004 and 2009. It remains the only premium soft-top four-seater convertible in the small car segment, and the UK continues to be the largest market worldwide for the new MINI Convertible.

Brand new features include a fully electric roof that is quieter and smoother than the previous model, a fully integrated rollover protection system and more rear space than ever before.

A striking new exterior and interior design ensures the new MINI Convertible is unmistakably MINI, whilst showcasing a blend of



sporting flair and elegant dynamism. The all-new MINI Cooper Convertible and Cooper D Convertible are 3,821 mm long, with the MINI Cooper S Convertible 3,850 mm and the MINI John Cooper Works Convertible 3,874 mm long. All models are 1,727 mm wide, 1,415 mm high and have a wheelbase of 2,495 mm.

Those dimensions have increased compared with the outgoing model, with 98 mm extra length, 44 mm extra width and 1 mm extra height. The wheelbase is 28 mm longer and track width has also grown a further 42 mm at the front and 34 mm at the rear.

The increase in dimensions has enhanced comfort levels and freedom of movement in all four seats. The two front seats have a wider range of adjustment, while rear passengers benefit from easier access, more headroom, a longer seat surface and improved lateral support. The design of the new rear more clearly defines the two individual seats.

Day-to-day practicality has also improved. Smart design and interior packaging means luggage volume has expanded by around 25 per cent to 215 litres with the roof closed and 160 litres with it folded down.

A high level of standard equipment across the range includes MINI Visual Boost Radio with a 6.5-inch screen, MINI Connected, Bluetooth connectivity with USB audio, rear parking distance control and a reversing camera.

Personalisation is once again at the heart of the new MINI Convertible with several options available.

A four-car range is available – the MINI Cooper Convertible, MINI Cooper D Convertible, MINI Cooper S Convertible and the MINI John Cooper Works Convertible – with three petrol engines and one diesel. On-the-road pricing starts from £18,475.



.....
It remains the only premium soft-top four-seater convertible in the small car segment

Fully electric, the roof is suitable for year-round use and has been optimised for the very best heat and acoustic insulation. The front roof section can also be retracted by up to 40 cm, and at any speed. For a quick reaction to sudden changes in the weather, the soft-top can be opened and closed at speeds of up to 18 mph. As an alternative to the standard soft-top in black, a MINI Yours version is available for the first time with an integrated woven graphic. The lat-

est generation of EU6-compliant engines are installed under the bonnet.

The petrol engines inside MINI Cooper Convertible and MINI Cooper S Convertible – 1.5-litre three-cylinder and 2.0-litre four-cylinder respectively – feature turbo-charging, direct fuel injection with centrally positioned injectors, variable camshaft control on the intake and exhaust side (double VANOS) and fully variable VALVE-TRONIC valve control technology.

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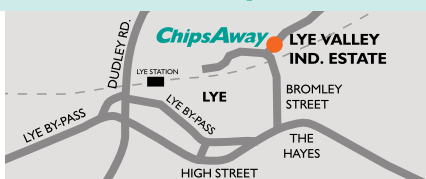
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Offers on award-winning Vivaro for British bands



Vauxhall retailer, Stourbridge Motor House, is thrilled to announce Vauxhall is rolling out the red carpet for up-and-coming British artists in Stourbridge, offering them free use of its award-winning Vivaro throughout the year.

Demonstrating commitment to supporting new talent, the Vivaro on Tour campaign has been launched for the second year running, helping unsigned bands take the Brit-built van on the road during their UK tour throughout 2016.

Going from strength-to-strength, the Vivaro scooped three awards at the Business Van Awards 2016, including being named as Business Van of the Year. In addition, Vauxhall built over 60,000 vans in the UK last year, making it Britain's number one van maker for the 14th year running.

Driving success, the Vivaro offers

functionality as well as business appeal, and Stourbridge Motor House is encouraging fresh talent in Stourbridge to gear up for their new adventures with the help of the award-winning vehicle.

Jason Stewart, general manager at the retailer on High Street, comments: "The Vivaro has proved to be a big hit with Brits and what better way to showcase its talent than to transport British talent? The Vivaro on Tour campaign is a great way of providing support and championing up-and-coming bands, becoming not just a van between venues, but a home away from home, transporting bands to places where they can experience their most memorable moments."

"The Vivaro has proven to be popular thanks to its reliability, impressively practical load area and its ability to be fuel-efficient; perfect for travelling on the road. We hope our vans will put bands in good stead and we really look forward to seeing them play in the near future."

If you're a band that's in need of a van to take on tour in 2016, the British-built Vivaro is up for grabs. Go to www.vauxhall.co.uk/VivaroOnTour or contact kate.oyley@vauxhall.co.uk for further information.

In addition, to help businesses in and around Stourbridge stay on the road with a modern and practical vehicle, local retailer Stourbridge Motor House is also offering a special limited time only offer on the Vivaro. With up to four years 0 per cent finance supported by four years servicing, four years warranty and four years roadside assistance, businesses can get on the road for less. Terms and conditions apply.*

For detailed information about the Vivaro on Tour campaign or any of the other models at Vauxhall, contact Stourbridge Motor House at High Street, Amblecote, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4DG. Alternatively, go online to www.stourbridgemotorhouse.co.uk or call 01384 447970.

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15/65 VIVA SE 1.0 A/C  5 door, Carbon Black, Delivery Miles SAVE £400 WAS £8,695 NOW £8,295	14/63 ADAM JAM 1.2  3 door, Red N Roll, 12,000 miles SAVE £500 WAS £7,995 NOW £7,495	15/65 CORSA STING 1.0 TURBO  3 door, Summit White, Delivery Miles SAVE £500 WAS £9,995 NOW £9,495	13/63 CORSA ENERGY 1.2  3 door, Sovereign Silver, Only 8,000 miles SAVE £1,000 WAS £7,895 NOW £6,895	15/64 INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0 CDTi 140ps  5 door, White, 12,200 miles (No RFL) SAVE £500 WAS £13,995 NOW £13,495	15/15 INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0 CDTi 140ps  5 door, Carbon Black, 9,500 miles (No RFL) SAVE £1,700 WAS £15,995 NOW £14,295
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14 63 ADAM JAM 1.2 3dr Red N Roll 12,000 Miles	£500	£7,995	£7,495
15 65 CORSA STING 1.0 TURBO 3dr Summit White Delivery Miles	£500	£9,995	£9,495
12 62 CORSA ACTIVE 1.2 5dr Pepper Dust 16,000 Miles	£700	£6,995	£6,295
13 13 CORSA ENERGY 1.4 3dr Asteroid Grey 17,000 Miles	£600	£7,295	£6,695
13 13 CORSA SE 1.4 5dr Silver Lake 20,000 Miles	£700	£7,495	£6,795
13 13 CORSA SXI 1.4 3dr Flame Red 23,000 Miles 17" Alloys & VXR Styling Pack	£1,000	£7,495	SOLD
13 63 CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3dr Sovereign Silver Only 8,000 Miles	£1,000	£7,895	£6,895
14 14 CORSA SE 1.2 5dr Sovereign Silver 18,500 Miles	£500	£7,795	£7,295
14 14 CORSA LIMITED EDITION 1.3CDTi 5dr White/Black 27,000 Miles	£700	£8,995	£8,295
15 64 INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0CDTi 140ps 5dr White 12,200 Miles (No RFL)	£500	£13,995	£13,495
15 15 INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0CDTi 140ps 5dr Power Red 15,000 Miles (No RFL)	£1,500	£15,495	SOLD
15 15 INSIGNIA SRI NAV 2.0CDTi 140ps 5dr Carbon Black 9,500 Miles (No RFL)	£1,700	£15,995	£14,295

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14 14 CORSA STING 1.0 3dr Crinan Blue 9,400 Miles			£6,495
12 12 CORSA ACTIVE 1.2 3dr Technical Grey 21,200 Miles			£6,395
13 13 CORSA ENERGY 1.2 5dr Asteroid Grey 24,000 Miles			£6,995
13 13 CORSA SXI 1.2 16V 5dr Carbon Black 17,000 Miles			£6,995
13 13 CORSA SXI 1.4 5dr Flame Red 21,700 Miles			£6,995
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09 59 ASTRA SRI 1.7CDTi 5dr Carbon Black 55,000 Miles			£6,995

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12 62 ASTRA ACTIVE 1.6 5dr Carbon Black 15,500 Miles			£7,995
14 64 ASTRA LIMITED EDITION 1.6CDTi Summit White (Leather Trim) Our Demo	£500	£12,995	£12,495

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10 60 MERIVA EXCLUSIV 1.4 TURBO Technical Grey 35,000 Miles			£5,995
11 11 MERIVA SE 1.4 TURBO Black Sapphire 28,000 Miles			£6,495
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14 64 INSIGNIA ELITE NAV 2.0CDTi 140ps 5dr Flip Chip Silver 13,500 Miles	£500	£15,495	£14,995
15 65 INSIGNIA SRI VX-LINE NAV 1.6CDTi Sovereign Silver 5,000 Miles			£16,995
15 65 INSIGNIA SRI VX-LINE NAV 1.6CDTi Asteroid Grey 5,000 Miles			£16,995
15 65 INSIGNIA SRI VX-LINE NAV SPORTS TOURER 1.6CDTi Sovereign Silver 2,200 Miles			£17,995

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8 Motoring



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VW PASSAT S Aug 2005, 6 months MoT, blue, 76,500 miles, excellent condition £1,850 ono. 07854 938883. 07398 991971, no texts.

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10 Personals

personal

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YVONNE, single mum, happy with life, but would like to meet someone to share fun times with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420695

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FEMALE, 37, new to area, would like to meet nice trustworthy man, for friendship hopefully more. Text only to mailbox: 5392585

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JULIE, 47, blonde brown eyes, size 12, varied interests, loves cuddling, kissing and showing affection, seeks similar energetic male friend for TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420357

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WALSALL male looking for lady for no strings adult fun on a regular basis, within 10 miles of Walsall is preferred but not essential, age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 40181

STEVE 58 yrs, 6ft, average build, seeking woman for NSA mutual pleasure, marital status unimportant. Text only to mailbox: 5400701

YOUNG at heart lonely 55yr old male, 5ft 10, medium build, n/s, GSOH, loyal, looking for a female for adult fun time, possible LTR. Text only to mailbox: 5321154

MARK, 44, very interesting person, own business, sporty, honest and genuine, likes nights out, meals out, cinema, country walks, WLTm a lady for friendship and good company leading to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420841

MALE, 63, caring, easygoing, N/S seeks female 50-70 for friendship and romance. Looks unimportant. Likes occasional drink, eating in/out, cinema and mutual pleasure, marital status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418893

STEVEN, 39, caring and clean, looking for female for fun, laughter and companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420861

MALE, 46, slim, WLTm a lady to settle me down, if that's your please get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420863

62yr old professional male seeks female 55-70, curvy and feminine, for fun, laughter and relationship. Text only to mailbox: 4435871

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MALE 63, N/S, honest, GSOH, car owner, seeks female, 55-70 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416817

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Still on the ball – former Wolves player Andy Mutch



Andy Mutch during his Wolves days



Steve Bull and Andy Mutch reunited for a fans question and answer session



Goalscorers Andy Mutch and Robbie Dennison celebrate as they lift the Sherpa Van Trophy back in 1988

So Mutch to remember of Andy's 30 golden years

IT'S 30 years since the union between Wolves and striker Andy Mutch began – but on his first day he managed to turn up an hour late.

The Scouser netted 96 times in 289 games over a seven-year spell at the club after joining Wolves on February 22, 1986.

The popular forward, who was inducted into Wolves' Hall of Fame in 2013, is best remembered for a goal-laden partnership up front with club legend Steve Bull. But there was no sign of Bull when Mutch rocked up at Molineux, after a £5,000 fee had been agreed with non-league Southport.

Mishap

He was coming to a club that had won all of England's major honours at a time when they were heading towards their lowest ebb – relegation into the bottom tier of the Football League.

Becoming a full-time footballer in the process was all weighing heavily on Mutch as he drove down the M62 to put pen to paper, landing elsewhere initially after a mishap!

He said: "My mind was just racing about what was ahead of me and Manchester was not the place I needed to be on this particular day!"

"I'd missed the turn off for Wolverhampton and had to re-route, so I turned up about an hour late to sign. It wasn't the best start to my career at Wolves."

Mutch's dream of making the game his living had come true, though, having fallen out of the professional ranks after starting out with Everton.

Wolves boss Sammy Chapman spotted him and

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Craig Birch

"I had the time of my life with Wolves, nothing else ever came close. It was a great ride to be on."

paid a small fee to take him from the Sandgrounders, where he'd made his senior debut. Mutch said: "I was a schoolboy at Everton, at a time when the club was very successful. It didn't work but, when I was 18, they asked me to come back. I played 18 games for the reserve team.

"I left again and went to Southport, who were part-time and in the Northern Premier League, and got a day job delivering fridges.

"We'd played at Kidderminster Harriers in the FA Trophy, it was a replay after we'd drew 1-1 at our place. We lost 6-1 there, but I got the goal!

"Sammy was the Wolves manager, at the time, and was there watching the game. I'd scored lots of goals for Southport, so it wasn't a surprise that someone had come in for me.

"What I was actually getting paid when I went to Wolves was buttons. It was probably less than I earned playing football and working.

"But Wolves were a club that was synonymous to

me. I used to watch 'Kick Off' with Gerald Sinstadt as a kid and they were always on television."

It was, by no means, an easy time to be a Wolves player with the club heading for relegation from the old Third Division under the disastrous ownership of the Bhatti brothers.

Wolves went through three managers in his first year, but settled on Graham Turner in the October who would lead them to two promotions.

One of his first acts was to sign Bull and Andy Thompson from Albion in a double deal, with Bull and Mutch spearheading the rise through the divisions. Mutch scored the first goal, with Robbie Dennison getting the second, at Wembley as Wolves beat Burnley 2-0 in the 1988 Sherpa Van Trophy final.

Trophy

"Graham Turner brought a new type of professionalism into the club. He always knew how to get the best out of me. I always rated him as the best manager I've ever played under."

Turner spent seven-and-a-half years at the helm before making way for Graham Taylor in 1994 and sold Mutch the year before his departure.

Premier League new-boys Swindon Town came calling for a £250,000 move in August 1993, meaning Mutch played in the top-flight during his career.

He would go on to play for Wigan Athletic and Stockport County before dropping back into non-league.

The 52-year-old said: "I never wanted to leave Wolves, but I got the feeling from the club that they thought it was time for me to move on. I had the time of my life with Wolves, nothing else ever came close. It was a great ride to be on."

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Glassboys 'keeper to the rescue

Stourbridge 1 Frickley Athletic 1
STOURBRIDGE climbed back into the Evo-Stik League Premier Division play-off positions but didn't claim maximum points against a Frickley side who frustrated them for much of the game.

Glassboys boss Gary Hackett admitted, "We peppered their goal and we probably created more chances than in games we've won this season. Frickley scored from their first attack and that gave them something to hang on to."

"But the most important thing is that we didn't lose and that could have easily happened at the death."

The Glassboys dictated the first half but fell behind on 24 minutes when a high clearance deceived the Stourbridge defence with its bounce and fell for Luke Hinsley to rifle home his shot past Glassboys 'keeper Matthew Gould from the edge of the box.

Stourbridge equalised within 31 seconds after the interval. They won a throw-in straight from kick-off and full-back Kristian Green squared the ball across the face of Frickley's goal for the league's leading marksman Karl Hawley to convert with a low shot.

Stourbridge stepped up the pace and began to lay siege to Frickley's goal. They could have won it from a 77th-minute corner when central defender Dan Scarr saw his goal-bound header punched out by Frickley 'keeper Seb Malkowski. The ball fell for Hawley but Malkowski turned the ball over the crossbar.

Stour created a string of chances, Stuart Pierpoint heading wide from a Sean Geddes corner while Matt Dodd lobbed inches over. Sub Ashley Vincent broke through in the 89th minute but Malkowski turned his shot round the post. Five minutes into stoppage time, Frickley striker Jacob Hazel found himself free in front of goal but Gould made a vital save.

Hagley take title for first time as Pedmore beaten

Cookley (72-1) lost to Hagley (73-0) by six wickets

COOKLEY fielded only five players as a result of a late withdrawal and struggled against the champions elect, losing Todd Henderson for 14 with the score at 31. The innings finished with Cookley on 72, a target of just six an over.

Joe Lennon set about the Cookley bowling with enthusiasm and plundered 13 from Dan Soley's first over and 12 in the second before retiring. Stead and John McDonnell both hit 20 as Hagley reaching the total in the sixth over.

Pedmore (87-3) lost to Oldswinford (88-1) by one wicket

OLDSWINFORD elected to bowl. Openers Dan Jones and Matt Porter started well but Jones was run out with the score on 27. Pedmore lost a second wicket on 38 leaving Porter and John Hurdman to try to restore normal service. On the retirement of Porter the scoring slowed, 87 is rarely a sufficient target although Oldswinford made the task look more difficult, reaching the target in the 11th over. Pedmore's loss saw the league title go to Hagley for the first time.

Gethin sidelined for hometown bout

Boxing
WALSALL'S Luke Paddock has local rival Martin Gethin firmly in his sights as he looks to pass his audition at the Town Hall this Saturday.

The super-lightweight duo seemed to be on a collision course with the pair slated to star on Black Country Boxing's 'Cool Hand & The Gang' bill this weekend.

HOWEVER, a pulled chest muscle means Gethin has been sidelined and will instead take up a ringside seat for the show with Paddock headlining. And, providing 'Cool Hand' comes through unscathed on Saturday, the Bloxwich boxer is relishing a proposed scrap with former world title contender Gethin. 'Paddock is in action over six

Boxing

against former Central area title contender Lee Connelly, while Halesowen's super middleweight Lennox 'Dangerous' Clarke faces Swindon's former Southern and IBF Inter-Continental champion Kelvin Young and Wednesfield's unbeaten warrior Des Bowater is up at super featherweight against capable livewire Chris Adaway.

Bowater's older brother Sid Bowater also gets himself up and running with a welterweight four-rounder against Brummie Dwayne Sheldon, in second pro outings for both fighters.

Midlands light middleweight champion and two-time British title challenger Jason Welborn, from Rowley Regis, features, while West Bromwich's Tom Stokes has seen his middleweight four-round affair with Stoke's scrapper Mark Till resurrected. Two debutants will switch sports from kickboxing, including Kyle Williams of Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton.

The 24-year-old will continue to teach at Fran Zuccala's Kickboxing and Gracie Jiu Jitsu club alongside his new calling. Williams will turn over at bantam. Tickets, priced at £30 and £60 ring-side, are still on sale from the Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900.

LOYAL SUPPORT FOR HEATHENS

CRADLEY Heathens continue to break club records – before the season has even started!

Just over a week before their opening meeting with Belle Vue at Monmore on March 28, club sponsorship has reached an all-time high on the back of record breaking season ticket sales.

Their main team sponsors Motor Market of Cradley Heath have pledged their support for another season through lifelong supporters Adam and Dean Bridge.

Returning hero Ashley Morris visited the Motor Market premises, overlooking the housing estate site of the old Dudley Wood Stadium, at the weekend to thank the duo for their backing.

With new club partners joining – including Dr Rod Brooks and Dudley Stroke Association – boss Will Pottinger has paid tribute to those who have stepped forward to back the club.

"What people may forget is that the club's future was very uncertain just a few months ago," he said. "It was a tough time for everyone at the club, but credit must be given to the management team for sticking by the team and turning things on its head."

"Sponsorship and the commercial side of things are a massively important part of modern day speedway. In any sport nowadays, you simply cannot rely on the entrance admission money alone because costs are greater than ever."

"While it's always good to welcome new sponsors on board, at the same time it's great and very reassuring when we're able to keep sponsors and club partners year after year. It gives you a solid foundation. We're very fortunate at the Heathens because we've got some fantastic title team sponsors in Motor Market Ltd, who are now our longest serving sponsors and we're delighted to team up with them again."

"We've got some brilliant club partners on board in Venue Cuisine, Steve Taylor Construction Specialists, House of Watches and especially Dudley Stroke Association. We owe a large debt of gratitude to Dr Rod Brooks from the association because he played a vital role in helping keep the club alive over the winter."

"We're equally delighted to continue our partnership with Curtis Sport. Stuart Curtis is a lifelong Heathens fan."

Charlesworth bags British crown



Brandon Prince, Reuben, WAKO president Nev Wray, Raj Chripal and Haydon Lindley

LOWER Gornal fighter Reuben Charlesworth has been called up for England after adding to more crowns to his bulging collection.

The teenager retained his Mens -74kg British Kickboxing title for the third year in a row. Halesowen Martial Arts instructor Charlesworth who also is an unbeaten boxer, kept his British title in Birmingham against some of the best Points Fighting kickboxers the UK has to offer.

Charlesworth's elimination fights were all very close fought contests with the final against a very good fighter from Andover, Brandon Prince, who had already bagged a title in the weight below. The adversaries had only met

once before with Charlesworth victorious. This fight was very tense with each kick and punch felt around the arena.

A close fight, it went to sudden death after three hard rounds. Charlesworth sent out a body shot with the final shot to hold on to his British title.

The 18-year-old followed that up with a win in the Irish Open at the same weight.

He will have a local contingent cheering him on when he back in the ring on home soil to put his undefeated boxing skills on the line. He represents England – against Ireland – for the British Boxing Union in Brierley Hill on April 30.

Battle for survival on the boards

THE week started with a faltering performance by Stourbridge, the Wolverhampton chess league division 3 team, who have performed miracles this season.

A win for Jeremy Humphries and draws for Tony Shaw and Martin Beridge were not enough to prevent a 3-2 defeat to Halesowen. This almost hands Lichfield the title in what has been a two horse race. Stourbridge's runners-up spot is also now in danger as their one remaining match is against Kidderminster, who are also in contention.

The Birmingham league division 3 relegation battle was centre stage on Tuesday as Stourbridge Chess Club seconds travelled to Birmingham.

Stourbridge needed a point from two matches to be safe whereas Birmingham were playing their last match and needed at least one point to have any chance of surviving. All boards appeared evenly matched with Birmingham slightly stronger on top boards and Stour having the edge on bottom board. Captain Paul Sharratt agreed a very quick draw with black. The queens had gone early from Ron Evans's game but he soon established a better position and won to put Stourbridge ahead. Sam Bradley was next to finish with a draw, making it 2-1 Stourbridge and only one point needed to secure division 3 survival.

Dave Scriven had been on the back foot facing the Tarrasch variation against his French defence but was eventually able to checkmate his opponent. Eric Horwill played a rook check that won the queen. His opponent resigned and Stourbridge seconds were safe. Tony Shaw won on time to give a final score of 5-1.

A strong Wolverhampton league division 1 team won at to Kidderminster to go second two points behind leaders Lichfield but with two matches in hand.

Spartans beaten by Clarke's strike

Blyth Spartans 0 Halesowen Town 1
HALESOWEN stunned league leaders Blyth with a hard-fought victory after Tyree Clarke snatched the winner with a first-half breakaway.

The on-loan Stourbridge striker upset the form book and also bagged his second Halesowen goal in two games.

The Yeltz shrugged off their long journey to force several early corners but top-of-the-table Blyth's Alex Nicholson made a good run in the 21st minute before fluffing his shot. Arran Wearmouth went close twice and had a penalty appeal turned down before Yeltz struck in the 35th minute.

★★★

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